The Collected Stories of Joshua Rovero

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To my own family, in regards to my

Mother - Mercy Tuazon
Father - Rey Rovero
Sister - Hazel Marzan

And to fellow friends and supporters

Who supported me in the publication of this collection of short stories I made over the past couple of years in the making.

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Preface

Once, I was an imaginative dreamer.

When I was a man of a young age, long before I was an adult or a teenager, I imagined worlds with stories enriched in them. My mind – which the rivers of imagination always flow – always plays the world of the imagined, where things come alive in my ideal world of stories that I come up with; I build unique worlds of light, the light of detail, the light of an imagined world: all under my imaginative mind when I play with my toys, or draw on my meager notebook, or write in it. Even in playing pretend with other people, I build lively stories with a lively lore for everyone to participate in.

What a wonderful mind a child has, creating stories, characters and worlds

– all under his ideas and imagination in the mind.

However, the spirit of imagination does not die when I was a kid did not fade or die as I grow up.

In fact, the ability to imagine remained a part of me.

A part of my core.

Writing stories by my own imagination is like creating another universe, this time with a piece of you in it. When you build a world, you make your own rules, the rules of your imagination. The worlds and characters we build have stories to tell, each a moment, each an experience.

The moment I write is the moment the colors of my own imagination bloom forward into the stories and worlds I create; the stroke of words I emit from my brain to the world

is the birth and beginning of a new universe of stories to tell.

That is how wonderful it is to create a story for everyone to read and enjoy with; that, is how beautiful writing can be.

And thus, these short stories I wrote as an author – long kept, planned to release today – are testaments to my still active imagination and the ability to write fiction stories that kept myself not just busy, but have an active imagination to imagine new worlds of life with.

And to my Dear Reader, my final words for this Preface to you?

Enjoy reading them, and step forward into the worlds of my stories I made.

Joshua Kyle T. Rovero
May 25th 2024

The Peyote and the Blue Jay

There was once a Blue Jay who walked on the endless field of dandelions. He walked, flew and strolled around to peck and eat dragonflies in the fields. He continued this for hours in the endless fields of greenery plains surrounded by tall flowers and tall grass. He can breathe the air freely, he can eat whatever he can eat, and nature becomes a place of beneficial paradise for the Blue Jay and the world – and at peace with his soul and the world.

As he flew farther and farther, he saw and tilted its head at the sight in his direction; a lone, black and sad cactus.

So by the nature of his curiosity, he flew and flew all towards the direction of the tree. And as he grew near it, the greenery faded; the healthy grass turned dry, no small creatures dominate the land, the earth began to die.

But he saw the dying cactus, and was curious about the place.

So he flew further and further, and saw the land into black; nothing was there, the earth was lifeless and blank. The paradisiacal place of wonder was no more, where there is food everywhere, and nature being happy and alive by its own essence.

The happy blue sky turned to black skies of yore, whispering the apocalypse; but he had to get to the tree, for the tree still stood in this desolate place of nothing – lifeless and sad was the earth in this place.

In what seems like forever, he reached the place; a lone, sad and withering cactus, lifeless and with nothing to give with. At the base of the cactus were white materials, shining and glowing; but it did not touch the cactus, it was surrounded by it.

The Blue Jay did not know what to do, so he waited a little longer to see what happened to the land.

Lightning strikes everywhere!

The black rain appears.

And the Blue Jay can see as far to know what happens if the black rain touches the ground. And lo! He saw the result; dying plants, dead nature!

It's acid rain!

But he needed to find a shelter, and there was none.

However, in the cactus lies a cave for shelter; the big cactus opened its organic body signalling to come inside.

And so, he did come inside.

The inside of the Cactus is a realm of unexpected beauty and tranquility. The Blue Jay found himself surrounded by vibrant colors and gentle melodies that seemed to emanate from the very walls of the cactus. It was as if he had entered another world entirely, a sanctuary hidden within the desolation of the outer landscape. This world was truly a new domain, brimming with kaleidoscopic visions and other things that no one can explain.

And then, the Blue Jay saw one of this visions: a black, desolate land that will engulf the world in nothing. There will be no life, no nothing; and he saw his lifeless

body being dead in this dead land - a lifeless body, a lifeless land.

The death of the world.

He backed off and shook his head hard enough to dissipate the vision: he became fearful of the visions, uncomfortable. But he kept on exploring the world.

As he explored further, the Blue Jay discovered that the cactus was not just a plant, but a sentient being known as the Peyote Plant; it is alive, brought to life as it saw the Blue Jay in his realm. The Blue Jay, entering a world of bizarre strangeness, heard the first words of the land for the first time:

"I shelter you."

And the Blue Jay understood the words; indeed, the Peyote saw the creature's feeling of the suffering of the world, and the Peyote knew that the world

was going black, but he does not know why the world was going into sadness.

So he asked, "Why is the world going black, my fellow one?"

And he said: "The Giants have ruined the world in everything they touch. They once roamed the world and made things from the land to benefit themselves for care. But one day, the Giants turned the land into a lifeless one, because they started polluting Paradise while ruining the land more, all because of themselves. And now, all the Giants were gone and dead, save for the land they ruined."

"What should I do?" asked the Blue Jay.

"With the last of my powers, restore the world into what it once was; a world full of life and nature, of trees and peace, of goodness inherent in the world created by the great order of the world,

Wakan Tanka (Great Spirit); I am one of His Messengers, and I speak to you, my fellow disciple, to restore the world in its full glory, so that He may be happy again."

Deeply moved by the Peyote Plant's words, the Blue Jay vowed to help restore the beauty and vitality of the land outside. The Blue Jay then nodded, and said. "I accept the Grace of Life bestowed upon us to restore the world for all of us."

With the guidance of the Peyote, he flew out into the acid rain, braving the dangers to spread seeds and nurture new life wherever he could. The Holy Seeds gifted by Him and passed down to the Peyote, he spread throughout the land.

And suddenly, he knew why the world was not truly alive.

So, with fervor, he spread all of the seeds across the world in this plained paradise, with vigour and fanaticism.

And once he was done, he returned to the Peyote, who said: "Look!"

And lo!

Slowly but surely, the land began to heal. Plants sprouted from the barren soil, and the black skies started to clear. All of the lands are alive, with trees instead of just grass; with animals and myriads of creatures roaming in the New Paradise. The Blue Jay's efforts, combined with the magic of the Peyote Plant, brought hope and renewal to the once desolate landscape.

"Thank you! You saved me, and the Great Spirit was happy again!" said the Peyote.

"No problem; you are welcome, but I thank you too for letting me know what happened to the land, and not just that: we made a New Paradise that

contains all of His creations to flourish free and forever!" said the Blue Jay.

And so, they became silent; then the Peyote, as God's Messenger, asked his new disciple, the Blue Jay thus: "Should we become the guardians of the creations of the Great Spirit?"

And the Blue Jay said, "Yes, we should be."

And so, the Blue Jay and the Peyote Plant became guardians of the land, their bond a symbol of the enduring power of nature and the importance of unity in the face of adversity. Together, they watched over the fields of dandelions and the endless expanse of greenery, ensuring that the beauty of the natural world would never fade away.

And so, as the Sun dawned, the Peyote, with his first spout of wisdom, spoke these words to the Blue Jay:

"Care for one another and for others so that blessings will come to you from Him."

A Ball of Fire

1435 AD
Somewhere in the Purépecha Empire

Nestled between rolling hills and green meadows, with rich flora and fauna undisturbed, somewhere in the territories of the Purépecha Empire, there was a once quaint city dominated by stone-built rounded, T-shaped religious temples known as Yácatas and agricultural fields, complete with houses, markets, and other buildings that serve other purposes to keep the city running. People across the city are embroiled in work in the day, such as constructing new buildings, weaving

fabrics, making jars for different purposes, fishing in lakes, performing religious rites, selling their goods across the empire, and other activities, such as recreational activities.

But this was not just some ordinary day for the people; it was a special day today for them.

A very special one.

The people were busier than ever, and in high spirits – for it is the coronation day of the new Irecha of the Purépechan peoples, the subjects, of the Empire: Tangáxuan I. They talk about their new Irecha, about what he will do on taking the throne, and sometimes, other than that, they talk about their new lives too – and their expectations to come, for his coronation coincided with the Purépechan New Year.

When the busy morning became the afternoon, the busy activity turned into an atmosphere of celebration. Fires lit up for illumination had lit up across the city, and people are beginning to prepare for the celebrations to come.

The city was alive, but it became even more vibrant as the day of the New Year has begun.

However, between the market and the Yácata, there was a family with two children. The house is made of wood and dry stones for the walls, with two small rooms for the parent and of their children, as well as space for cooking their meals. Their parents are named Tsitsiki and Erandi – the Mother and Father, respectively. As for their children – a daughter and son – are named Ireri and Arhirukuni, respectively.

Hearing the sounds of the bustling city and with the moon rising overhead, after a long sleep due to tiredness of working in weaving beautiful clothing, Ireri awoke out of her room and looked forward, seeing his mother finished cooking food. It was a vegetable stew known as Atápakuas, her favorite.

"Wake up, dear children – we have to go outside to attend the ballgame!" Tsitsiki called them affectionately. "It's time to eat!"

She walked and gathered around the family, and sat on the floor like with others, both legs stretched forward and placed the food pots to eat; she ate the Atápakuas first when the food cooled, swallowing the food slowly. She began to speak.

"Where is Arhirukuni?" she asked.

Erandi, after eating three pieces of corn, replied accordingly. “He left first because he participated and volunteered for the upcoming game.”

She ate her food again; Ireri was almost complete to eat. “And that is why we must finish our food – we must come to the grounds first!” said Tsitsiki.

And so they all ate and finished their food; and after closing the doors to the house, they proceeded to the bustling grounds where the ballgame was to take place. They walked numerous streets all the way to the field, where the ballgame – the Uárukua Ch'anakua[1] – will take place.

As they got there, and like so many others, they sat on the grass fields, waiting for the game to start.

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[1] *Translated from the Purépecha language to English, it means ‘a game with sticks’.*

Today, the community gathered at the local field on a crisp afternoon for the much-anticipated Uárukua Ch'anakua, so special for not only it was a coronation, but also a celebration of the New Year. The Moon hung in the sky, casting a warm glow on the grassy expanse. Excitement buzzed through the air as players prepared for the showdown, each team eager to claim victory.

The field was marked with lines dug for this purpose, creating a rectangular battleground divided into two halves. At the center, a small circle denoted the starting point for each period of play. The teams, distinguishable by their vibrant clothing colors, stood on either side. The moment each of the teams appeared, the crowd was roaring forward, happy as they are!

Ireri and her family cheered up, but their excitement goes off the chart when they saw their son, Arhirukuni, appear on another team, dressed in yellow.

In front of the field was a Yácata – this time, it was big and accompanied by the Grand Pavilion, built nine years ago by the previous monarch.

However, the crowds simmer down as the Grand Messenger rose his two hands wide in the air, and ordered them to stop; this wasn't just a mere simple match, it was also a sacred one.

The Grand Messenger began to speak. "Hear, our fellow ones! The astronomers who divine the skies…"

And they, the people, look upward.

"…said the Moon is not yet in the middle and aligned with the pyramid, but as the first event in the New Year, we will

officially commence the match! But before that happens, a word from your Kasikuare[2], Hutaco!"

Then the Priest appeared by the side of the Grand Messenger, and began to speak. "My fellow countrymen, this special game today is marked by not just a special occasion, but also this – a clear moon and clear skies, by Cuerauáperi, she gave us a good omen!"

And the people cheered once more.

Then the Priest – the Kasikuare – continued. "But first, let me tell you a story why did we play this sacred sport of ours."

And he proceeded to explain.

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[2] *Literally means 'priest'. A Priest in charge of maintaining the Yácatas.*

"Long ago, in the infancy of the world, the old sun, known as Cupantziere, challenged Ahchurihirepe in a game of ball to regain his supremacy all over the domains of the world as the giver and nurturer of life against Ahchurihirepe – the dreaded embodiment of the night. Cupantziere challenged Ahchurihirepe for the reason that Ahchurihirepe was tempted by the Evil Goddess Auicamine to kidnap and devour the young sun, Siratatáperi. As the cosmic spheres collided in a celestial contest, Cupantziere found himself overpowered and defeated in the first ballgame, and he was defeated, and began to fade from the world, save his lifeless form and his remaining essence – thus light had died, the darkness began to reign the world in terror, consuming everything and corrupting it.

However, from the depths of the horizon emerged his resilient son, sensing and hearing the pain and agony of the old sun, the young sun and bearer of the light rose Siratatáperi, casting a

warm glow and in rage, ascended from the east to succeed and avenge his father's death.

Witnessing his father's lifeless form, Siratatáperi felt an unwavering determination to restore the old sun's vitality. With the strength of his rays, he gathered the essence of Cupantziere's fading light and transformed it into a majestic deer. This radiant creature, embodying the essence of the fallen sun, gracefully rose and, to the astonishment of all, galloped away towards the northern skies. And that is why, unlike the realms of the East[3], we do not sacrifice people after this sacred ballgame.

Now, and thus, while Cupantziere became a deer, Siratatáperi took the mantle of his Father's job (for him so loved his father, who cared for him) and fought back the ever-growing darkness that repeats all over and over – and that is why we have day and night!"

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[3] *The Mayan and Aztec Civilizations.*

And the people listened to his sermon, while the Kasikuare, Hutaco, cleared his throat and began concluding his sermon:

"*Now my fellows, what should we learn from here? Remember that in moments of defeat and darkness, the dawn of a new day brings forth the potential for renewal and rebirth. Losing is fine, defeat is fine, as long as you learn from it and change yourself for the better. Do not give up, and be a better person more than ever! The indomitable spirit of Siratatáperi teaches us and reminds us that from the ashes of setbacks, a radiant resurgence can emerge, breathing life into what was once believed lost. Thus, let us embrace the cycles of life with hope and resilience, for every dusk carries within it the promise of a radiant dawn*."

And they all began to pray to the Sun God Curicaveri, and paid tribute in the form of simple offerings to

Cuerauáperi – the god who made the whole universe and all that exists.

After the ceremony, both the Priest and the Grand Messenger began to shout, "Let the Games begin! Referee, you have the floor to commence!"

And the Referee indeed, took the floor to speak. "We have two teams, the Sun, led by Arhirukuni the leader, and the Moon – the opposing team – led by Caracomoco the leader!"

And the Referee inhaled and exhaled, shouting: "We proceed… to commence!"

The game commenced as the Referee's drums began to sound and echoed across the field and the ball is set on fire, the match has begun. The small, hard ball made of wool and fire resin rolled into the center, surrounded by the

stampede of eager players. The objective was simple: maneuver the ball using a wooden stick, known as a hockey stick, into the other team's goal area.

Both teams showcased their agility and skill as they deftly handled the ball, weaving through opponents and executing precise passes; Arhirukuni gained the upper hand as he yanked the ball from another member from the Team Moon. The clatter of sticks colliding and the occasional shout of strategy filled the air. Teamwork was crucial, as players communicated through quick gestures and exchanged glances to outsmart their opponents.

The field was a dynamic space, with players constantly shifting positions to intercept passes and block shots. Caracomoco, the leader of Team Moon and the other six players worked tirelessly

to protect their goal, using their sticks to deflect the ball and thwart the advances of Team Sun. Meanwhile, Arhirukuni and his team embarked on daring sprints, attempting to outmaneuver the defenders and attempt to seize an opportunity to score.

Only instead, the ball is yanked by the opposing member of Team Moon by a player named Xoropiti, his equal.

A symphony of action unfolded as the ball zipped back and forth across the field. The flaming ball is smacked forth and back, back and forth by Xoropiti and Arhirukuni until a member of Team Sun took the initiative and using his wooden stick, whacked the ball to another member (for the ball is in their court) until a Team Moon grabbed the ball and passed it to Caracomoco.

Then both sides executed skillful dribbles, showcasing their mastery of the game. It went on for an hour until the moon begins to align with the Yácatas and the Grand Pavillion, which if no one scored, is a sign of game over.

However, Caracomoco told the goalkeeper of team Moon, this:

"Guard the post!"

And the goalkeeper in his bad boy stance guarded the goal like a fortress, ready to repel any attempts to breach their defenses.

The crowd watched with bated breath as the game begins to reach its climax. Tensions ran high as the clock and situation ticked down, and both teams vied for that crucial goal. Spectators cheered and gasped with every near miss and successful block.

However, it all came to a head – just a moment before the moon aligned – Arhirukuni, brave as he is, took one of the most daring shots of the game, swiftly maneuvering past the defenders and launching the flaming ball with precision towards the guarded goal: the ball going outside the opponents field, and as the ball soared through the air, time seemed to stand still, until it finally found its mark outside the field (and in the opponents side, Team Moon), igniting the goal in a burst of fiery celebration, marking not only a victorious moment for Team Sun but also symbolizing the triumph of light over darkness, echoing the ancient tale told by the Kasikuare.

As the final whistle blew, the score has been counted one, and Team Sun won! People cheered on the victory of the new team and its leader to the point that

the six players of Team Sun carried Arhirukuni and threw him in the air a little in victory. For the first time, Team Sun actually won than in previous games, where Team Moon always won the matches.

Then, at the end of the game, each team, guided by the Referee and the Kasikuare, the two shook hands and hugged each other as a sign of respect and peace; and the Referee officially announces the winner to the Grand Messenger, and the Grand Messenger shouts the winner across the city.

Meanwhile, Ireri and her family greeted their son, Arhirukuni in joy and peace. "You have won the day, brother!" said Ireri.

"Your sister is happy to see you win! I know you could do it!" said Tsitsiki.

"We are proud of you." Said Erandi, and began pinching his cheeks and hugging him. "Indeed, we are proud of you."

"Thank you all for your support, my dearest family. Xaratanga had blessed me – and all of the other gods – with strength and peace for a new year, a new life." Arhirukuni said to his family.

And so, they celebrated their victory as a united and loving family.

As the grandiose moon began to align with the Grand Pavillion and the main Yácatas (as well as the other minor ones), the group of priests began appearing and announcing that the day of the New Year has begun. The Grand Messenger and the city leader who missed the entire game because he wished to visit the newly crowned ruler for goodwill, as

well as the other priests including the priest in charge of all other priests of the city, the Kasikuare named Hutaco, began to create a bonfire and began the Ch'upiri Jimbani – the lightening of the new fire in their language.

They began their celebration with the city leader who announced that the new ruler will come to the city to assess and improve the lives of people here, and the city leader – aided by the Grand Messenger and the Kasikuare, which Ireri and her family sighed in good relief, for they want improvements to the city, like the others. And then, he gave a message to all the people of the city about the importance of unity, resilience, and hope in the coming year and to support our new monarch.

And then, the participants and their leaders ask Curicaveri for abundance

in harvests, for safety, grace, and good health, as well as divine permission to use fire to cook the food that the earth will provide them.

And it all culminated in a great buffet where the people eat together communally in the spirit of unity and peace.

The Bon Monk and the Sun Bear

"Many a Man wished to see the world above, but neither one of them can reach it - unless good deeds are done."

Legs locked, arms folded, head at the sky.

The person was meditating on a spot by the hills surrounded by trees around him; the earth and surroundings were at peace with him, just like his soul. He stood in this position for some minutes now, as the sun begins to dawn at the golden hills of Mountain Valley. He remained with his eyes closed, and shut; the flow of mystical energies dominated

within his own body, for he can sense and feel from it.

He was one with the world.

This oneness, he felt, was neutral; and this neutrality seems to become one with him, as he remained steadfast in his meditation, in and above.

But however, it did not last long. He opened his eyes to see the forest and his surroundings; he got up, got his purse, and walked the silent trail towards the inside of the Great Monastery - a monastery for the monks of the Bon Religion. The Monastery was built in the era of the formative years of the Austronesian Union (also called the Majapahit Federation informally by its inhabitants) and the Reconsolidation Era, when Tibetan Immigrants who adhere to the Bon religion immigrated here - and the monk is one of the descendants from that

period in time, the first pioneers who came in this land.

As he walked in that trail, he felt relaxed; the soft rustle of leaves underfoot and the gentle whisper of the breeze through the trees created a symphony of natural sounds that further deepened his sense of peace. Each step he took was deliberate, a dance with the earth that grounded him even as his thoughts reached for the heavens. The path, worn smooth by generations of pilgrims and monks, seemed to welcome him, guiding him gently toward the sanctuary that was the Great Monastery.

Until then, at some point in his journey, he met a sun bear wandering in the wild, and it spotted him back. The sun bear was just eating an apple until the sun bear heard the rustling steps of the monk in the woods, and the man noticed the sun

bear back, surprised: even though it was quite cunning, trying to hide from potential predators, because of the small steps of the monk, he noticed the sun bear as always in his path.

And then, both eyes are locked on each other.

Each can see the glimmer in both of their eyes, the sun bear looking worried that he might steal his food (for it is starving), and the monk being tired from walking from the hill to the monastery. Both stood their ground, as they became weary of each action that may possibly take.

The man reached into his purse, getting a book; the book was 'The Nine Ways of Bon' - one of the sacred scriptures of the Bon religion - and he flipped it all in its pages; the book, written in the Tibetan language and in the Tibetan

script, was his family's heirloom for ages. He kept the book, not just because he was a faithful man to his religion, but because it had sentimental value: the sentimental value of love. For when the monk was a child, the father gave him a book in order to teach him the wisdom of their ancestors - and the father once said to him:

"Give a Man some wisdom, and he will grow with it. But do it with action and kindness, not with maliciousness."

Although the months have passed since his father's death, he still remembered it; he never failed to give up being kind with others, or give unto others the help they need.

So he scrolled through the pages, all while the sun bear was looking at him, now being wary - and he found one verse that resonates with him in this situation:

"Where no one is patient, continue to act kindly."

And, as he put down the book into his pocket, the sun bear indeed is not patient; he, in the sun bear's view, now views him as a threat, for not only he was starving, he sensed that the man is going to eat his food - and kill him! So the sun bear growled and switched into its defensive stance, staring at the man with fierce eyes of anger.

But the monk did not flinch; he stood there, not making any move, for any action he does would surely provoke the sun bear to attack and maul him!

So they stood there, with the night sky disappearing and the rays of the golden sun rising above the heavens. He has to think what to do in order to calm down the sun bear and make him a friend to the sun bear in order to not view him as

a threatening enemy - this was his first ethical trial in years!

So as the minutes passed, and the birds emerging to chirp at the dawn of the morning, he was hungry.

So he grabbed his purse, and looked at its contents. He found out that there were two apples in the purse, each uneaten. Hungry, he ate one whole; and the second one remained in the purse.

But then, he looked at the sun bear and saw that it was hungry and needed food, so he had an idea.

He grabbed the second apple, took a few steps in front of the sun bear, and placed it in the ground where he can see and eat them. Then he backed off to stay away from the sun bear, but within the sight of the sun bear to gain his trust from him.

And so, the sun bear walked slowly, sniffing the air cautiously, its eyes never leaving the monk. The monk remained still, his breathing steady, projecting distance for the sake of safety. The sun bear, driven by hunger and the scent of the fresh apple, eventually reached the offering. Then it sniffed the fruit, then took a tentative bite.

And then, the sun bear looked at the monk, twisting its head a little bit. The monk indeed, did not move - it just watched him.

Seeing that the monk made no sudden movements and did not seem to pose a threat, the sun bear began to eat more confidently, finishing the apple in a few quick bites. The monk watched silently, but sweating. But however, he sensed something from this action he made: it was as if, in this simple act of

sharing, a bridge had been built between them, transcending the boundaries of species.

When the sun bear finished eating, it looked up at the monk, its eyes softer and more curious than before: it twisted his head again. The monk smiled gently, bowing his head slightly in a gesture of peace. He then turned and continued his journey along the path, feeling the sun bear's gaze follow him for a while before it finally disappeared back into the forest. And the path to the monastery was silent again.

He was then walking safe, feeling the breeze of the air - while sweating.

As he approached the gates of the Great Monastery, the monk's heart was light. He had passed his first trial with a simple but profound act of kindness, something that he kept since he was a

child. Inside the monastery, the day was beginning; other monks were already engaged in their morning rituals and duties. The monk joined them, his mind reflecting on the lesson he had learned from the encounter with the sun bear.

But the monk thought, what did he learn from that encounter?

So he opened once again the book, 'The Nine Ways of Bon', skimming through the pages gently, and found two verses that resonated with him again:

"If things turn out ill, find a method to avoid them.

Do not turn your face away from an angry man."

The 'angry man', the sun bear, understood that it was angry because it was suffering from starvation, so one needs to help the sun bear which is starving - this, a lesson on compassion and

empathy, showed the monk that addressing the needs of others, even those who may seem hostile, is the path to true actual peace.

This realization deepened his understanding of his own spiritual practice. Compassion wasn't just a lofty ideal to meditate upon but a tangible action to be taken, a living practice that connected him with all beings.

And that, was the first lesson in so long he learned, long after his father's death.

And the monk will always learn this lesson.

And so, he entered the Great Monastery with a silent but a smile on his face.

And thus, he walked.

Over the following days, he continued his routine, meditating by the hills, studying the sacred texts, and performing his duties with diligence. The memory of the sun bear remained with him, a reminder of the importance of kindness and the subtle, yet powerful, impact it could have.

One evening, as the monk was preparing for meditation after walking to another hill, he noticed something at the edge of the forest. It was the sun bear, sitting quietly and watching him. The monk felt a rush of joy at the sight. He approached slowly, and the sun bear did not run away this time. Instead, it seemed to be waiting for him.

The monk sat down, reaching into his purse and finding another apple. He placed it on the ground between them and waited. The sun bear approached and ate

the apple, just as it had the first time. This became a silent ritual between them. Each morning and evening, the sun bear would appear, and the monk would share his food.

As the seasons changed and the days that come by, the bond between the monk and the sun bear deepened. The sun bear began to trust him more, even allowing the monk to gently touch its fur. In these moments, the monk felt a sense of unity to the world around him, to the teachings of his ancestors, and to the spirit of compassion that his father had instilled in him.

One day, while meditating, the monk felt a shift within himself. It was as if the energies he had been cultivating had reached a new level of understanding the world around him. The world around him seemed brighter, more vibrant. He

understood then that his journey was not just about merely personal enlightenment, but about the experience of being humane to others and to the world around him, including the living creations of the Great Divine Shaman - Shenlha Okar.

Years later, when the monk was old and gray, the story of the monk and the sun bear became a cherished legend among the newer generations of monks at the Great Monastery. They spoke of the monk's kindness and his ability to see the divine in all creatures. And so, the monk and the sun bear, two great and heavenly bestfriends, is now a symbol of the bond between nature and man, was remembered as a guardian spirit of the monastery.

The monk's legacy lived on through these stories, reminding everyone that true wisdom and enlightenment come

not just from meditation and study, but from the simple, everyday acts of kindness and the will to become human to others and with a reverence for, and to life - for right actions and good deeds lead to true enlightenment, not just through the soul, but to the wisdom of and for the living.

So was the tale of the Bon Monk and of the Sun Bear.

A Literal Fall from Heaven

Year 1950 AD.

Somewhere on an insignificant island in the Asia-Pacific, a white dot appears in the sky…

The chimes of large bells were starting to sound at the dawn of the sun. Their echoing chimes scream across the city, wide and eternal, vast across everything in everything. The chimes continue to roar forever; and then, the swing of the bells fade slowly and slowly, until the bells end their golden chimes.

It was a bright, new day; the newest of all days, with echoes of hopes and dreams fluttering around the bustling

town all the days that have reigned in the world.

However, at the church tower, two monks feel the breeze; they calmed the bell down back to its position, and the lever slowly hung the bell upward to calm it down.

"What a fine long day." Said the Monk.

"Indeed, Severino – a fine long day." Said the other.

"Stilbach, why don't you coil the ropes?" said Severino, who sat on a stool to calm his legs down.

"The ropes have been coiled by Timothy…" said Stilbach.

"Ah. Him." Severino scratched his head, and looked forward into the direction of the sun, right hand raising to block the glorious rays of the ascent of the Sun; birds fly and flutter all around.

And so, Stilbach looked for a chair; and he conveniently found one, and sat on it. He, too, was tired of ringing and helping Severino to ring the bell just before the sun rose above the sky – the most golden of events to start a brand new day.

Stilbach looked at the sky – for he was bored – and saw a bright star in the distance. It was bright and luminous; it was so bright that he can't see it was even a star at all. Because it felt unusual for him, he felt the need to call Severino and go here in this position.

"Severino… is that a star? Come see this…" he said.

Severino got himself up in his chair and walked to him. Stilbach pointed at the sky gracefully, and Severino looked towards the direction of the sky where his colleague was pointing. He was awed at

the sight; a beautiful star at the beginning of the day!

"It is a star, silly! Indeed, a bright star…" Severino laughed. "…you called me for this silly thing, but I appreciate you."

But he felt uneasy, and he begin sweating. "Stars don't shine like that," remarked Stilbach.

"Oh, some stars do…" Severino said.

However, despite these, the white pale dot gets bigger, and bigger, and bigger…

All across the town, the white pale dot grows in its unusualness.

People started noticing the growing white pale dot, and they all stared upwards and stopped their activity to see the unusual sighting in the sky. This

unusual sighting had them puzzled; the entire town was spooked, but not alarmed, to see a new bright star in the sky – their somber faces turned into small smiles.

The roads are stopping; the town halts and looks at it! All life was stopped at a standstill, and there is nothing they can do to stare at it.

Inside the Church, the disciples and the priests looked at the heavenly skies. They were awed by a sudden appearance of this white object across the sky, and they cannot help but wonder. Some of them became hysterical and ecstatic, looking upwards without remittance; they cannot help but watch them, as the white dot was coasting above in its glory.

Across the Christian Church was an Observatory; the scientists have seen and recently studied the phenomena that

was unfolding in front of them, but they remained unsure of what cause this event to happen.

"What do you mean?" Damien asked.

"It's just a white pale dot, Sire. Nothing more… it just glows, it's unexplainable!" his co-worker, Nablus, said while searching the sky for clues.

"We have to know more…" Damien said calmly, his hands on face. "Juanin, have you analyzed the characteristics of the… thing?"

"The Thing… it moves and gains exponential speed like there was nothing there; it breaks quite all known laws of Physics. It is unimaginable to see this happening. How does this even exist?" said Juanin, looking at the screens and fumbling to the papers generated by the data machine.

Damien's face looks surprisingly worried.

"Is that even possible? What could it be?" Damien questioned; he cannot believe it! A scientific anomaly discovered right here in the heavens in this small insignificant town…

And the entire observatory wandered right above their heads, wandering why such a phenomenon even happened right in front of their faces. What could it be? The Island curiously wanders forward.

Above the atmosphere, a metal object gains speed slowly and slowly in the Exosphere.

Once suspended above the Earth's atmosphere, that metal object, subject to the unyielding pull of gravity, embarks on a journey fraught with

physical phenomena that affects the object entirely at will. Initially motionless (as the scientists of the Observatory observed the white-dotted object that they theorized it to be a metal object), it succumbs to the inexorable force of gravitational attraction, gradually accelerating as it plummets towards the planet's surface.

As the metal object descends through the expanse of the atmosphere, it encounters resistance in the form of air molecules. This encounter initiates a complex interplay of forces known as aerodynamic drag, impeding the object's descent. The atmosphere exerts a retarding force proportional to the square of the object's velocity, causing it to gradually decelerate as it descends.

And so, the Descent Begins…

While the bright, white dot goes much brighter than it is than all of the stars in the heavens, and the metal object just starting to enter the atmosphere, two monks decided to go to the observatory at the edge of the small town in the island. The small observatory, once funded by a private individual when this island was once owned by a millionaire, now stands to be kept by the curious scientists who wish to keep the Observatory in good condition; the Observatory, especially at the base of the structure, contains a Library, where children come to read books and learn from them.

And the observatory was surrounded by lush, rare flora – a private garden of exotic plants collected from anywhere in the world, suited to the tropical climates of this hemisphere.

Stilbach and Severino met with Damien and Juanin, and they shook hands with each other; they were all on friendly terms with each other, for since it's a small community and a self-sufficient one, why bother to be violent with each other if you can cooperate with each other?

Actually, Damien was once averse to Severino because of ideological differences and not of personal gaffes; they were once enemies, but not the outright kind — only the subtle, proxy-ish kind. During the previous elections some many years ago when the Island, once a private piece of land that became a self-governing and thriving community, they often competed for influence amongst the people of the Island, and one way they did this was supporting the candidates of said elections by influencing them at all costs. Damien supported the first ruler of the

Island named Bernhard Budiwati, a reformist person who won the election and initiated sweeping reforms to the island, and Severino supporting Damanhur Gassowe, a traditionalist ruler and the father of the current island ruler. Not too grand an intrigue, but certainly for an intrigue for both Damien and Severino because of ideological differences.

But that was a long time ago, when the Island was still in infancy and remained in contact with the outside world long ago – before the port broke in a storm, forcing the quaint Island to be self-sufficient, then Budiwati declaring "true independence" (the term was vague), died of a heart attack, succeeded by a democratic council which is weak in power. And then succeeded Damanhur Gassowe, who is known for couping what he perceived as an ineffective,

incompetent democratic rule for the first time, and after seizing the government, abandoned pure Traditionalism and sought reason on the middle ground which led him to continue Gassowe's reforms and maintained the sovereignty of the small Island and move towards true self-sufficiency, then succeeded by Retez Bozai, and then the current leader of the Island, Buassi Gassowe.

And because of these developments, once enemies, these two men became friends, even finding friends along the way, which led to Severino finding Stilbach and Damien finding Nablus.

Today, both men are friendly and jolly in their lives, desperately trying to cooperate with each other in society for the sake of the people; they are tired of the conflict of ideals and want to work

together not just for peace, but also for a stable society.

And now, they came here to ask about the bright white dot in the sky.

"We don't know for sure, but it's some kind of a metal object. Other than that, we don't know; we have research and know more about the white dot…" said Damien.

"Ah, I see – quite interesting, but are you working on it?" said Stilbach.

"Yes, of course. Us Scientists have to work on a phenomena to know what would be that…" said Damien again.

"And what if it would hit us?" said Severino.

Juanin walked into them and said: "Then we must be fully prepared."

But then, running into the garden with then, Nablus, in all horrified excitement as he was, shaking, said to

them in a loud voice: "Sires… we have a problem."

"What is it, Nablus?" said Damien.

"We have calculated the trajectory of that object. It's heading right straight to us…" Nablus said, and then fainted, falling flat.

Damien asked Juanin to send him to the clinic; the two monks looked at each other, and Nablus became temporarily faint after realizing that the trajectory of the object was in fact, heading towards them.

Once a private radio station, it became owned by the villagers of the small island.

And the announcement that it is going to hit the island had sounded throughout the Island.

The people of the island had different reactions, some scared for their lives, some fled their homes to take shelter in an abandoned Second World War-era Bunker (built by the Japanese sometime in 1943 as an expectation for an American attack that didn't come), and all the other myriad reactions that comes with a Fight-or-Flight response whenever situations like this come forward.

The quaint village of 500 people really does see the things whenever something happens that is not of their control – the people scramble, they panic, they seek shelter in the most secure places they can find, hoping that whatever is hurtling towards them from the sky will spare their lives and leave their homes untouched, as the tension and fear grip the small island community in an iron grip of uncertainty and dread.

The Village Council of the Island asked them to do not panic and riot; for it just so happens that they have to calm down, for that wasn't even the final assessment yet, and the Observatory needs to confirm it again if it really was heading in our direction.

Although the people calmed down, an atmosphere of uneasiness reigns the world of the people in the island.

But however, led by the opposition, Retez Bosai – who was once deposed and ostracized from the island for embezzlement of funds and lost the last village election – attempted to stage an uprising against the current democratic leader of the Village Council, that being Buassi Gasowe.

Bosai believed that he faked it up to boost votes for the next upcoming election, in which Gasowe

straightforwardly denied. With the calm chaos of the village, he attempted to stage a coup against him; the shortest military battle in history, the Battle of the Island, fought between eight soldiers (four for each side), lasted for 30 Minutes, until he was accidentally shot by a policeman named Stanley Juan, ending the so-called One-Day Coup.

However, as for the populace, they did not even know there was even a coup against their government until announced later by the Radio Station.

However, the monks want to go to the Church to lead the people in prayer.

And in the most calm way possible.

But as they go inside, they saw something – a change in tone, a change in mood, a change in everything… the

environment changed, and it miraculously happened overnight. What was once a holy place for Christians turned into something different.

Inside the "church", the Christian Cross was added with the symbol of a four-sided white star, which is entirely made of Styrofoam; the altar containing the icons of the saints were replaced by the iconographic figures of the star in the heavens, the inside of the building, once there rows of chairs, transformed into a u-shaped format of the rows (each side of the corners of the church a pew), and in the middle was a space for rituals dedicated to the coming of the star.

However, a ritual was going on to appease and celebrate the birth of the new god. They chanted in a monorhythmic manner, their voices rising and falling with each repetition of new created verses to

express their love for the White Dot. The air (and so does the altar) was thick with the scent of a mix of incense and gasoline to create an aromatic smell, swirling around the makeshift altar adorned with offerings of fruits, flowers, and small trinkets.

The congregation of the new ritual, a mix of villagers and newcomers drawn by the spectacle in the sky, swayed in unison, their eyes closed in fervent devotion.

Severino and Stilbach were shocked to see them do this; was this the work of the Devil, or a response to the uncertainty of the White Dot, fueled by Hysteria and Death?

They quickly go to one of the rooms that are now abandoned. They began to talk to each other.

"We are the only Monks in this island. I think we failed in our mission to continue forth the message of Jesus Christ here in this island. For thirty years after the passing of my Father, I have cared for them, and now my disciples are turning away from His glory! We have to stop them!" said Severino, and then he peeped through the door to see the people dancing around the ring and people in the chairs reciting the new hymns they themselves have created.

"It was the fastest change of faith I have ever seen in my life." Stilbach was more than confused; and Stilbach continued to talk. "Last week, they were Christians, but everything changed when the White Dot came and changed all our lives. This is impossible! How can they change so quick, so new, in such a short span of time, without warning?"

Both of them got silent.

"Perhaps they want a change in faith; we came in this Island isolated from the rest of the archipelago. This change, which I do not know; how and why, that confuses me. Did the people so readily embrace this new belief?" Stilbach pondered aloud, his brow furrowed in deep thought.

Severino shook his head slowly, his gaze fixed on the distant figures swaying in devotion. "I cannot say for certain, brother. It seems as though the appearance of the White Dot has sparked something primal within them, something that transcends logic and reason. Perhaps it's the allure of the unknown, the promise of something greater than themselves. Perhaps… a purpose."

Stilbach nodded, his lips pressed into a thin line. "But to abandon their faith

so swiftly, without hesitation… It troubles me deeply. Have we failed them in some way? Have we not been diligent enough in our teachings?"

Severino placed a reassuring hand on Stilbach's shoulder. "We have done all that we can, my brother. We have devoted our lives to guiding these people in the ways of the Lord. But sometimes, the will of the people cannot be swayed by mere words alone. We must have faith that they will find their way back to the true path in due time."

Stilbach sighed heavily, his gaze still fixed on the congregation below. "I pray that you are right, Severino. For now, all we can do is continue to lead by example and pray for guidance. May the Lord grant us strength in these trying times."

Both looked and peeked at the door, seeing that the ritual was still continuing, they were still shocked to see it continue, seeing the creation of a new faith unfolding inside the Church. The Church was no longer a "church" in the sense of abiding the will to follow the teachings of Jesus Christ; this "church" is now devoted to worshipping the teachings of the White Dot.

Yet, as they watched the faithful worshiping this newfound deity, a sense of reverence not offered by the Christian Church washed over them. They try to fight the urge to abandon the one true faith for some new religion forming in the background; but it cannot be fought with sheer strength of mind alone. Perhaps, they thought, this bright white dot was more than just a celestial anomaly; perhaps it was the catalyst for a new belief, a new

hope, in the hearts of those who sought meaning in the mysteries of the universe. And so, with hesitant steps, the monks joined the congregation, their prayers merging with the chants of the devoted, as they embraced the dawn of a new faith born from the heavens above.

But as they joined the congregation, a sudden realization struck them in the face of viewing the disciples of this new faith; a feeling of eureka came over them, but they cannot express it otherwise. There was something that they felt, and now they can't point it out.

And then, a eureka.

They now know the reason why there was a sudden change in faith and the creation of a New Religion right in their eyes:

Hysteria and Dread in the coming of the white star – two extreme emotions, coalesced into one.

The Metal Object beings to gain speed at a faster rate as it falls forth.

Despite the atmospheric resistance, the metal object's velocity continues to increase, albeit at a decreasing rate, due to the relentless pull of gravity. As it nears the Earth's surface, the force of gravity predominates, accelerating the object to ever greater speeds…

And with this phenomena, the white dot becomes bigger and bigger, brighter and brighter; and from the Island to the sky, people began to notice. Doubt for skeptics turned to fear; a myriad of screams and scurries hurtled in different directions. The extremities of human

emotions had popped and boiled over; and when everyone heard the first screams, at first – people wondered. But the moment they saw them running, they looked up the sky.

The 'White Comet' (as so they dubbed) is approaching.

The Metal Object split into two, giving the impression of two 'comets' hitting the Island; fear, mass fear – becomes the normal response, the final answer to the 'fight-or-flight' response to the masses of people.

In the Church, one disciple came into the Church and said, "Stop the ritual!"

And then the people stopped, froze like people in ice. They all turned around (including the two monks) to look at him.

And oh, to Stilbach's surprise, he recognized that face; it was Timothy, a fellow devout disciple, now turned to worship to the new god!

"The White Dot, the White Dot… it's falling and approaching fast! Come, come, His Will has come! Let us be outside, my fellow brethren; march to the hill northwards, and see the glory of His coming! March, March, His Will had come!"

And they all marched outside, repeating the last chant made by Timothy.

The Metal Objects became two; one is destined to hit the Observatory, one destined to hit the Church.

Finally, with both objects at velocity reaching terminal magnitude, both hurtle towards the ground with formidable kinetic energy. Upon impact,

this kinetic energy is dissipated through a series of dynamic interactions between the object and the Earth's surface.

The collision initiates a rapid transfer of momentum, deforming both the metal object and the impacted surface; but in this case, both had destroyed totally the Church and the Observatory. In the moments following impact, the kinetic energy of the metal objects is transformed into other forms of energy, such as heat and sound. The release of thermal energy may result in localized heating of the impacted area, while the generation of sound waves propagates through the surrounding environment.

In the aftermath of the collision, the once-kinetic metal objects comes to rest, its journey from the depths of space to the surface of the Earth culminating in

a dramatic display of physical principles at work.

At the cost of two destroyed buildings in the quaint little island.

Over the hill looking over the entire island, in the midst of confusion (they had lost the group of White Dot worshippers), after ducking and covering themselves, they have seen the total damaged it caused.

The entire town was shocked to find out that there are two craters where once stood their beloved landmarks—the Observatory and the Church. The once bustling village was now shrouded in a thick cloud of dust and debris, obscuring the once familiar sights and sounds. The impact of the metal objects had left a profound mark on the landscape, leaving behind twin craters as grim reminders of

the destructive power unleashed from above.

Amidst the chaos and devastation, the villagers emerged from their shelters, their faces etched with expressions of disbelief and sorrow. Tears welled up in their eyes as they surveyed the extent of the damage, a terrified response to the power of what would later the islanders call 'Divine Messengers'.

However, Severino and Stilbach began to walk, and descended down the hill; they walked into the gate leading to the quaint village-town, and the villagers emerged weakly from the clouds of dust and ash; there they walked and walked, seeing the buildings covered in ash and some buildings destroyed by way of fragments and the flung rocks ahead.

Amidst the rubble and debris, and in the aftermath of the catastrophe,

Severino and Stilbach knew that their mission to guide and support their fellow islanders had never been more important. With faith as their anchor, they vowed to help their community heal and rebuild, one step at a time.

However, they heard sounds of curiosity, the loud sounds of mumbling, and they will go in that direction to investigate.

So they took the right road, leading to the park, where they saw more recovering villagers and those who help; but this was not the sound of loud murmuring. They saw Timothy providing a first-aid kit to a wounded villager along with his disciples, and Timothy saw them – this time with a happy smile.

Timothy approached the two monks and said, "Hey! Uh, you two… yes, you both-"

Severino said, "What was the matter? Why are you distressed?"

Timothy looked at the back and pointed. "Damien and the other villagers! They… they saw the body of the Divided God… You should see them."

And so, both monks looked at each other's faces, and headed to that direction to see what the fuss was all about.

The crater that was once the Church was small; but it was powerful enough to level some buildings within 150 meters. Buildings were shaved and flattened by the force of impact; the city center was not spared from its path. Across the view, the town hall was partially destroyed, with the west side in flames currently put out by firemen and the east side intact.

Stilbach and Severino walked and looked at the crater and stumbled on it; it was kind of deep, so they never bothered to go in there.

But they saw one thing inside the crater, so special it might seem extraordinary, it was foreign; they have no idea what it was, but they can conclude one thing from it…

Inside the crater, there was a broken but intact metal fragments of a deformed object: it was clearly the remnants of the metal object that had plummeted from the sky. But what caught their attention was the peculiar shape of the fragments. Among the twisted wreckage, they spotted a symbol etched onto the surface of one of the larger pieces—a symbol that seemed eerily familiar yet wholly alien.

Severino and Stilbach exchanged puzzled glances before cautiously approaching the fragment. As they drew nearer, they realized that the symbol bore a striking resemblance to the four-sided white star that had adorned the makeshift altar in the transformed church.

But this was no four-sided white star; they attempted to shrug off the dusted part of the symbol – and insignia – it was a white, five-star symbol!

And below it was the words 'USA', but they shrugged it off.

"Could it be…?" Stilbach murmured, his voice barely audible over the din of the surrounding chaos.

Severino nodded solemnly, his eyes fixed on the enigmatic symbol. "It seems that the object from the heavens… it was more than just a metal comet. It

carried with it a message—a message that has shaken their faith to its core."

Stilbach's brow furrowed in confusion. "But what could it mean? What connection does this symbol have to the white dot…?"

Severino sighed heavily, his gaze still fixed on the fragment. "I do not know, my brother. But one thing is certain: there are forces at work here that are far beyond our comprehension. Forces that have sparked a transformation in our community, and perhaps even in our very souls."

Before Severino could respond, they heard footsteps approaching from behind. Turning around, they saw Damien and several other villagers making their way down into the crater, their expressions a mix of astonishment and disbelief.

"Father Severino, Brother Stilbach, have you seen this?" Damien exclaimed, gesturing towards the metal fragment that he held.

Severino looked at the metal fragment first. He checked it at all angles possible to see if he can discern anything: but alas, there was nothing he could say, for he is astonished. So he gave it to his trusted friend Stilbach, who did the same who was utterly confused, and gave it back to Damien, who smiled and checked the same – the three men have no idea what it is.

Severino nodded. "Yes, Damien. It seems to be a piece of the object that crashed into the Earth."

And then Nablus slided down the crater and chuckled. "This was a piece of metal found from the crater at the Observatory."

While they were having their conversation, they can hear the rocks grumbling and a man shouting, "Whoa, whoa! Take it easy…"

And the three men turned around and saw Timothy sliding down the crater to reach them; the villagers above the crater were silently watching them.

Stilbach looked at Daniel politely and said, "Can I look at that fragment again?"

Daniel handed him back the fragment out of respect for the monks, and Stilbach looked at the fragment carefully; the fragment displayed too, a five-sided star, but instead of being colored red, it was colored white; and below it, four letters: CCCP.

And them, Timothy goes near them, and proceeds to go to the wreckage of the rocket. He prostrated in front of the

rocket, and begins to chant in a ritual song. At first, the island was silent, but then the island started chanting all; and then, Timothy stopped and walked, picking fragments and made a makeshift amulet from them, composing of wires and electronic material, burnt to a crisp.

Then Timothy walked up to them, and saw the fragment. "Can I have that fragment?" said Timothy to Daniel.

And Daniel replied, "Sure, why not?" and gave the fragment to him.

So Timothy took the fragment, raised his two hands above the fragment like a winner, and declared, "Behold, the remnants of our new deity, the Divine Stars, the White and the Red Glorious Dots! Let us cherish this sacred relic and honor its arrival with reverence and devotion."

Severino and Stilbach exchanged a glance, unsure of how to respond to Timothy's fervent proclamation. The villagers around them seemed to share Timothy's enthusiasm, their faces alight with a mixture of awe and reverence. "We must gather the people and hold a ceremony to pay homage to the Divine Stars," Timothy continued, his voice ringing out across the crater.

And so, Timothy instantly created the second ritual that would become the foundation of the new religion that will emerge from the island: its followers would soon calm those White Dotters, but in time they will call themselves the Starfellers, as it was known in the Island today.

As they stood in silent contemplation amidst the rubble of their

once-holy sanctuary, Severino and Stilbach were overcome with a profound sense of uncertainty and awe. The events of the day had shattered their understanding of the world and left them grappling with questions that seemed to have no answers; but to the three men who stood there, they are mere spectators in the unfolding of history, the creation of a new civilization right before their eyes…

…And they cannot stop it either way, for the three had just witnessed a literal fall from heaven, insignificant as it may be.

The Biscuit

Meanwhile, in a Meeting Sanctuary, somewhere in Southeast Asia...

Deep below the Meeting Sanctuaries of the Crescentists, groups of people making these Bread Biscuits are harvesting meat from an abominative bioengineered species; inside the Bread Biscuits were genetic wetware chips designed to create dangerous hallucinatory effects on people with the ability to exploit the mind; and then, they make the bread biscuits, bake them with ingredients, and then produced in mass quantities, and shipped all over Asia.

And thus after making the biscuits and distributing around all Asia and across the world, the makers and cultists chant holy songs to the White Crescent, which is a giant mass of abominative wetware that is sentient, shaped in the form of a perfectly rectangular and white monolith, praising the biscuit...

...and chanting for the coming new evolution of the Human Race, the Great Ascendancy of Man, they called.

A new era.

A new humanity.

All contained in a new discreet biscuit.

"I am tired." Said to myself while walking down the street.

I was once walking down the street, minding my own business, walking

towards the apartment. It was sundown; and I got an early out.

But then I was hungry, And I suddenly remembered that I did not eat the afternoon snack; so my tummy rumbled, and I had to eat food to relieve my stomach of hunger – for once I got home, I will cook my own food to be full again.

Luckily for me, in this street are stalls of food stalls, which my apartment faces; in this city they call this place a 'Foodstall Emporium', but they call it a Food Market by the populace here.

So I got there, and scanned every food stall they have, which in this corner of the Foodstall Emporium was the so-called 'Cultural Area'. Filipino Foods, Thailand Foods, Japanese Foods, Portuguese, and all sorts of foods from

different countries are here in this corner of the city.

But nothing satisfied me; so I bought a barbecue stick from one of the stalls.

But it still did not satisfy my hunger; I wanted something unique.

So I have to look at all of the stores everywhere. So, I turned to another section of the Foodstall Emporium – which contains religious foodstalls, or just foodstalls that are operated by people of different religions. Muslim Stalls, Yezidi Stalls – all religious stalls, but nothing satisfied me.

So, I was left with no options, and then I saw something unique.

A stall at the end of the Religious Emporium, without people passing by.

So I got there, and stood by it. It says "Biscuit House", which is probably

their brand. A man wearing a cape bearing the rectangle insignia (all in white) emerges and puts down his cellphone in the drawer. He said, "Welcome to Biscuit House, sir! A product made from the Children of the White Crescent. How are you doing?"

"Oh, I am fine." Said I. And then, I paused, trying to find the menu. So I said, "Where is your menu?"

"Ah! The menu." The Caped Man said, and gave the menu to me. And so I looked at the menu, and, true to their name, it is indeed just full of biscuits, but also Ice Cream Sandwiches too, something quite unique in this stall.

I scanned, and pointed at the Meat Biscuit, and showed it to him. "You want the Meat Biscuit?"

"Yes please," said I. He prepared the biscuit, made it in front of me, and

cooked a strange meat I did not see before, but I did not question it.

And so I waited for a few minutes, and when he was finished, he wrapped it up and placed a label on it. He gave it to me and said, "Here you go sir."

"Thank you," said I, and gave the money to him.

And then I walked away, got back on the street again, walking to my apartment in peace.

As I got that to my apartment and rested myself for a while, I turned around to the biscuit I bought.

I observed the packaging of the food It was not plastic based but paper based; something I know this in many of the stores ever since and act burning the use of plastics has been issued in the city.

Then I look at the label of the wrapper. It says (and said it out loud) "Meat Biscuit. Made by the Children of the White Crescent (or commonly called Crescentines), a community of friendly religious people. Made with love, for the people."

Then I look at the ingredients section. Meat and a Hardened Dough composed Flour, Milk, Sugar and Salt, Fat, and a Leavening Agent.

After observing the package, I looked at the biscuit. It was big, but not big enough; it was a bread biscuit – one of my favorite foods since I was a kid. Inside there was a strange meat; but it looked like the other meats I have seen, and I just shrugged it off.

However, there was a paper that fell from the wrapper after I placed the wrapper in the table.

I picked it up, and looked at it. It was a small, tiny flyer advertising the Crescentines. It said that they are a new religion formed to worship the White Crescent, a "being of the Eternity Beyond", it said; the White Crescent being a monolith to serve and bring forth the Great Ascendancy. They have their own holy scripture, which is the Aromantices; their founder and Messiah to the White Crescent being someone named Curbos. They list out their doctrines called the Three Tenets. Which are:

1) Love the Life you have and be Peaceful with Life and the World itself;

2) Devotedly worship the White Crescent and the Monolith, in altars and in amulets; and

3) Spread and Proselytize the Teachings of the White Crescent by means of good acts.

And at the end of the paper, they said, if you read this message, one can call this number or scan the QR Code, and it finishes off in an arcane script, then a quote:

"In the Beyond, with the Beyond, for the Beyond."

And I placed the paper in the table along with the wrapper.

And so, I ate it.

At first, I did not feel anything; but as I ate the biscuit, something changed in me, and I cannot point out why. I began to nauseate (but not to the point of vomiting); but then the feeling of discomfort became the feeling of joy and happiness. Because of this, I ate the biscuit further whole in twenty minutes without significant change.

And in those twenty minutes, I felt good, watched the news, played video games and stuff.

But after twenty minutes, a sharp pain emanated from my chest, then the entire body. I felt as if I was stung and shot by a gun at the same time at first, but then the mood changed as it felt like I was being soothed; then repeat again and again for a seemingly endless amount of time until I lied down in the ground. And suddenly, I was being pulled into a vortex of swirling colors and distorted shapes. Reality itself seemed to warp and contort around me, and I found myself plunged into a hallucinatory nightmare.

In the nightmare, visions of bizarre landscapes and grotesque creatures flooded my mind, each more terrifying than the last. It felt like a lucid dream, but it really was not a dream: *I can feel it, all*

sounds and shapes, all horrors going one with my mind, all smokes and touches in the dream, I felt it all. I struggled to maintain a grip on my sanity as the boundaries between dream and reality blurred beyond recognition, for once it broke down, I screamed for help. But no one can hear me. My body moves, but I cannot emit the sounds necessary to say help.

The I became erratic, and my body changed; from normal, precious skin I have become dots and dots and dots with eyes that became black voids, and my skin tearing off like paper, melting and tearing it apart until I can see my muscles, without blood falling; then the walls of my house began to close in, with pulsating holes growing larger and more numerous with each passing moment. My breath came with ragged gasps as I felt herself being

swallowed whole by the nightmarish abyss.

Then came the visions.

In holes within holes, hellish and incomprehensible universes of light and form; indescribable was the surroundings, but I saw a White Crescent with holes in front of me.

Then it became large and large, showing upon its texture of holes depicting my disfigured form in each of them, blurry as it is. Then the White Crescent turned off its side and became a clear white Monolith, opening up its mouth and swallowed me whole. I felt pain, immense pain at this point, and dazzling lights penetrate my skull until I faint and never see what happens during that time.

After I awoke and opened my eyes, I stumbled upon fragments of

forgotten memories and suppressed fears, each manifesting in twisted forms before my eyes. The meat from the biscuit seemed to pulse with a malevolent energy, whispering secrets of an ancient power that lurked beyond the veil of comprehension.

As the hallucinations intensified, I felt as though I was being torn apart from within, my very essence unraveling in the maelstrom of madness. Desperate to escape the nightmare, I reached out for anything resembling sanity, but found only darkness closing in around me.

And then, just as suddenly as it had begun, the hallucinations ceased, leaving me gasping for air and drenched in cold sweat. Trembling and disoriented, I struggled to comprehend what had just transpired.

The things that happened to me were not real: the disfigured grotesqueness of my skin was no there, and it remained perfect skin; nothing happened to my body afterwards, nothing changed. I was back to myself what I have been doing again.

And then, the biscuit lay before me, innocuous and ordinary once more, but I could sense that something had fundamentally changed within me. Whether for better or for worse, I could not say, but one thing was certain – I had glimpsed a reality beyond comprehension, and it had forever altered the course of my existence.

So, I decided I want to get fresh air. Maybe it's because of the stress, I do not know; but one thing is for certain, is that it was real.

As I opened my curtains and my windows, I saw the city skyline; it was the breath of fresh air, of a city in motion, with real and alive people.

But most importantly, it was real. I can feel it.

So I decided to grab a glass of water, and grabbed an electric kettle, made tea from it, and grabbed a chair to sit by the window, and turned on the radio. It played classical music; then I sat behind the window with a chair, sipped tea, and was at peace.

I looked upward, and saw the star and the moon.

I looked at it for a few minutes, but something was off; a small white streak rages across the sky, which I assume is to be a meteor, comet, or a space station; but as I continued to see it, it "hit" or "stopped" at the direction of the moon.

"Huh," I exclaimed. Maybe a new moon colony?

However, I sipped my tea and looked at the moon again.

It turned on its side, revealing its horrified but beautiful, face.

And I was immediately captured by it, exclaiming, "Oh, so Beautiful!"

And it began to go large and fall, at first slowly, then it became fast.

And it devoured me whole until I fainted at the falling of the White Moon.

Meanwhile, in a report by the radio:

"Police found the body of a 27-year-old man named Carlos Euboea in his apartment in New Bali this Tuesday, 8:10 AM. In the crime scene, they found his body near the opened window and a chair beside it. On the table, a bread biscuit made by the Crescentines, which has been

found in multiple rooms across the City. A witness named Ahmed Mansur-Ole called the police after he heard loud shrieks, screams and sneers and babblings in the other room. Fearing a possible robbery, or domestic violence, he tried to stay put and waited for the police. When the police and the investigators came, they entered the room and found a lifeless body of a man alone, with a 'white hat' or a white tumor object in his head, measuring 1.3 meters in his head. There were no signs of struggle or homicide in the room; just a man, a biscuit allegedly made by the Crescentists (or Crescentines), and a room showing signs of psychotic self-struggle, in the form of cracks and tears in the walls and other objects.

Scenes like this happen all over New Bali, and not just in New Bali, but

across all Asia; one reported similar incidents in Europe occurred too but this has not been confirmed. The Crescentists have denied that their biscuit products are contaminated; instead, they believe fake imitators laden with lead poisoning did it, which they believe are "trying to hurt the reputation of a new religion and discriminate us by means of doing these terrible acts," said the Current Prime Messiah of Crescentism, Oboen. However, alleged ex-members of the Cult have come forward and, they said it was the Crescentists have done this act "to purify the world and perfect it at all costs", which Oboen denied. This is a developing story by the Greater Asia News Network, more at the Midnight News in 11 PM..."

A Little Burning Memory

I.

Let us tell the memory
That is burning bright
Little by little told thus
In Mankind's story

– The Diarize of Earth (simply known as the Diarize), Book of the Journey, Chapter 1, Verses 1 to 4 [Diarize 1:1-4]

Do you remember a slight tinge of memory that engulfs the very meaning that surrounds it? Yes, yes, I do… I do. I. Do.

"Starboard side hit!" the speaker blared, and an explosion can be heard inside the starship. The fire of mass-array cannons outside the starship continued to hammer down the enemy bogey that was approaching them.

In the hangar decks, the fast feet of pilots marched in single file amidst the hellfire of attack; they have marched and marched and ran until they reached their hangar pods. Each of these pilots sat under the chair-elevator and let them do the work of reaching their Starfighters. Their Starfighters are ready and locked; and once the pilot is prepared, armed and ready, they are ready to decompress and go.

One by one, the Starfighters roared to life, their engines humming with the anticipatory energy of impending battle. The hangar echoed with the

metallic clang of helmets securing in place and the muffled conversations between ground crews and pilots. The urgency in the air was palpable, a mixture of fear and determination that fueled the resolve of each pilot preparing to launch into the vast expanse of space.

One such pilot is the intelligent Cordon Allal, a pilot of the Asian Command of the Joint Force, who had been in service to the Joint Exploratory Forces for years; the best of the best pilots, those elite and excelled, have the option to join here.

And he did so out of opportunity.

"Allal, Pod 30-C, release, release, *release!*" the speaker blared.

He looked at the control stick and pushed the 'Release Button' on it with this right thumb.

Bubububububu…wuuuuuuuuuwhoOO OOOOSH! The loud sounds of the engine propelled him from the pod to the tunnel, and all the golden way to space.

He readjusted his helmet and opened his comms. "Sir, Allal of W-1 'Contingent', present, clear and ready!" he said with a stern voice of command and recognition.

"Allal, this is Lt. Mangelai, Contingent Squadron, enter formation." Said the voice on the radio.

His Starfighter rejoined with his group; and they all flied at a double-v formation. He remained fixed front in his cockpit; he looked at datascreens and digital meters on his control table to check the situation of the craft. *All is good, all is good*… he said silently in his head.

Nothing appeared in his physical visual except friendlies. Nor even the

spatial radar. And there was nothing except it.

He opened the comms once again. "Sir, no visuals sighted. No action confirmed." Allal said sternly and he looked from side to side. After a short silence and the hum of engines can only be heard, he broke the silence and said: "Sir, what was that explosion?"

"I'm glad you asked," the radio said. "Even pilot Antebares is confused. So far, the explosion did not make any significant damage onboard."

And then another silence. He looked at the ship behind his back and saw it just fine. *What was that explosion then?* He questioned.

And another minute of silence.

The radio crackled again. "Hey, Allal. Be careful out there; stay in wing formation as much as possible, we don't

know what happened. Also, HQ says that hull is intact and surprisingly undamaged; but whatever it is, it's possibly an enemy."

"Are there any major conflicts in this sector, sir?"

"Since the end of the Extrasolar War between the Alsafi Hegemony and the Centaurian Hegemony, what's left here is just pirates and bandits that are lurking in our trade routes; nothing else and only that." The radio became silent again.

He looked at the pendant after putting the entire ship locked on autopilot. The pendant in question contains two symbols: the artistic representation of Earth in Neo-Art Deco style and the insignia of the Joint Exploratory Force.

"Hey, you still there?" the radio crackled again in the silent void of space

and formations scurrying around and orbiting around the ship.

"Yes, I am." Allal replied.

"Hey, don't let the past get up to you. Cheer up." And then the radio became silent once more.

And Allal relaxed by, reclining to his seat. He remembered; he was an emigrant from the Solar System – the birthplace of Mankind, *of all mankind.* When the Extrasolar War came and went for ten long years, he saw Earth, Mars, and his home, Pluto, decimated in seconds; it was an awfully horrifying experience to him, and when the most crucial battle in galactic history known as the Battle for the Solar System (also known as the Battle for Mankind's Cradle), he became a refugee drifting on the battered and stable remains of the Mercurian Battlefortresses, where he endured and struggled to survive. He

endured the unimaginable cosmic storms that swept through the remnants of the once-flourishing planets. Among the debris of shattered moons and broken asteroids, Allal found solace in the memories of the lush landscapes of Earth and the icy plains of Pluto. As he reclined, he glanced at the holographic display showing the vastness of the interstellar void outside the spaceship's viewport. The refugee colonies that emerged from the remnants of the Solar System after the Extrasolar War today were now thriving, forming a mosaic of cultures and species brought together by the shared tragedy of their lost homeworlds. Allal couldn't help but marvel at the resilience of humanity and its newfound unity in the face of adversity.

But in the midst of it, desperate to rise in this brutal conditions, he wished to

be something more. And so he joined the Joint Exploratory Force and participated in the Battle of Luyten 726-8 where both sides are on equal footing; and he also was part of the mutiny on Proxima Centauri during the Golden Spring where the Anti-War Movements on all four Human Civilizations began to gain traction after the devastation of the Solar System; he remembered he was on the park, chanting *"lose our home, lose there is all!"* at that time.

And here today, he was patrolling at the outer reaches of the Solar System, hunting for pirates that lurked in the trade routes and keeping the transport ships safe.

That's all for reminiscing, he said. He opened up the radio and said, "There is no bogey or any other anomaly, shall we head back to the ship?"

"HQ confirms that it's just a false alarm; it was a mine implanted into a small asteroid."

He sighed. *Thank you, good news; I was safe. We all are safe.* He thanked himself.

"All squadrons, return back to the ship. False alarm, false alarm." The radio blared. "Also, update from HQ, word is that the last fleet of transport ships have left the Solar System. The depopulation of the Solar System has been finished in accordance to the Treaty of Laicalle." And then, the radio ended.

After the last announcement, he is repulsed and saddened at the thought of the Solar System's depopulation. The memories of Earth, Mars, and Pluto flooded his mind once again, each image etched with the indelible scars of war. He couldn't shake off the feeling of loss and longing, but duty compelled him to focus

on the present. As he guided his ship back to the hangar, he couldn't help but ponder the vastness of space and the price they paid for survival. The refugees, scattered among the stars, now faced the challenge of rebuilding their lives far from the cradle of humanity.

However, as the engines roared to life and was just approaching the squadron, a series of beeps and doots blared. At first, it was slow, but then it accelerated. He looked at it; *it was the radar, and the red dot is accelerating fast!*

He opened the radio quickly and said: “red bogey, fast approaching—“

And an explosion from the side damaged the Starfighter, sending him into an uncontrollable motion; the beeps and doots from all screens angrily chant at the same time. He spun uncontrollably, and uncontrollably…

He heard the radio scream: “We are under attack! Squadron, form on me, bogeys unknown! Allal...” and the Radio cuts to static.

Then he looked at his bottom-right side of the screens and it blared: OXYGEN DISSIPATING AND IS LOW.

After that, he fainted in his suit, and he fainted all forever… he saw the small explosions behind the ship as he drifted away, and minutes later, a small white trail approaches the ship, and in seconds, a white-yellow flash of light emitted powerfully; the ship has been destroyed.

And then, his view blackened.

II.

When a being wanders into my own lands,
He is left with more questions than more answers;
Pilgrim, if you come here into sacred ground,
One be awed in experience and not fear.

– The Diarize of Earth (simply known as the Diarize), Book of the Voice, Chapter 5, Verses 72 to 76 [Diarize 5:72-76]

He opened his eyes, slowly, slowly…

He scratched his head and looked above. A field of stars. He tried to stand upright, and he did, kicking the roof of the Starfighter to escape. Now he can get out.

However, the moment that Allal got out, he was in a different environment. Alien, foreign, and most certainly, impossible: he was on a planet that defied

all explanation but comprehensible enough to understand.

Now, he tried to get out. Allal stood on its red-black soil; it felt strangely soft yet firm beneath his boots. The atmosphere was breathable, a blend of gases unfamiliar to him, but miraculously sustaining life. As he surveyed his surroundings, towering crystalline structures shimmered with an ethereal glow, seemingly organic in design. The flora, adorned in hues unseen in the Solar System, swayed gently in a breeze that carried a harmonious hum. The alien sky displayed a mesmerizing dance of colors, weaving a tapestry of celestial artistry above, but the sky was still visible! *Visible!*

He was awed by the landscape; never did he saw something like this since his childhood era, provided that he did not touch Earth Soil and its biomes in his

days. Awe and bliss triumphed rather than the usual fear and uncertainty in this land.

He walked a few steps, and touched the soil; the same feeling as he touched this land for the first time. And it felt real, and he is most certainly not in the afterlife as he was expecting in his death. If this was the afterlife, how come he felt real and present and not be dead, something like a soul in Christianity or might have been moved to another life like in Buddhism? This occupied his mind for some time, but he concluded he is, in fact, a real, physical human person.

And Allal began to wonder what strange land he is in. First, he passed into the flora of wilderness, surreal in nature; the flora seemed to respond to his presence, unfolding and shimmering in vibrant patterns as he passed through. He felt that the land was watching him, but

there were no sounds that may emit unnatural; only the breeze existed as the sound in his hearing of the land.

"What is this Planet?" he questioned, but he wanted to go and find out more, so he kept wandering.

The air carried a gentle fragrance, a harmony of scents that evoked nostalgia for a home that once existed. The more he ventured, the more he noticed the symbiotic relationship between the flora and the crystalline structures, as if the entire ecosystem pulsated with a shared life force; it might just be a simple illusion of unity, but it might be a life force.

He continued on and reached the edge of a vast, iridescent lake that reflected the kaleidoscopic sky above. The liquid, unlike any water he had encountered, seemed to possess a luminous quality, casting ripples that echoed the colors of

the heavens. As he dipped his hand into the liquid, it felt cool yet invigorating, and he marveled at the interconnectedness of all elements in this alien world. He drank it, and he felt refreshed unlike the water served at the ship.

However he saw the horizon, and it beckoned in his sights of mysterious landscapes, inviting him to explore further. As he continued, he stumbled upon a geological formation that defied gravity, with floating rocks suspended in mid-air. The laws of physics appeared to be mere suggestions in this surreal realm, challenging his understanding of reality. *Or is it?*

He walked and touched the rocks; these are limestone hybrids, and the layers were intertwined with other rocks that he was familiar with, and some rocks that are not familiar to him.

And then, he walked and walked until he passed by another forest; this forest seems to be no longer bioluminescent as the previous, but lamp-like mushrooms and flowers dominate this ecosystem. The breeze is a little bit strong, but gentle.

From here, he saw something that is very, very much comprehensible to the mind but still wondered how this is possible.

Here lies a cubic structure, perfectly carved in each of the dimensions. And once he got near it, a small hole appeared and made it larger, suitable to his size and height. He felt a sudden urge to enter it, and he did! He slid down from the entrance and into a featureless tube.

At first, not much has happened, but the tube emits strange patterns from inside it; patterns of lines, squares and

different shapes and amalgamations consumed all together into a mish-mash of violent visual perplexities that satisfies the mind. *He was sucked into it!*

Allal cannot help but wonder about the complexity of this planet, and why it is so bizarre?

He is determined to find answers at the end of the journey of the tube.

III.

Hear, hear! When my voice reveals all truths
The truth of the world in an instant
You shall not turn away or revel
At the words of the Golden Holy.

– The Diarize of Earth (simply known as the Diarize), Book of Commandments, Chapter 10, Verses 16 to 20 [Diarize 10:16-20]

As he reached the end of the tube, he emerged in a large room surrounded by flowers and vine in a contained environment. He was greeted by a chair, a chair that looks like it was assembled in there naturally using small branches and fibers in perfect design and symmetry. He sat down on that chair and waited if there was any response. The tube itself was beginning to seal. At first, he almost panicked, but he calmed himself down trying to see the results at the end of it all.

What was this planet and what was this all? Allal thought.

Suddenly, a voice spoke. It is in clear English, the official language spoken by the Centaurian Confederacy; and he can comprehend and understand it well. Nevertheless he remained calm and stalwart.

"Do you wander why you are here?" the voice boomed.

"Yes." Allal answered.

"We saw you crash from the heavens above." The voice spoke again.

"Crashed… after I was attacked in my own Starfighter by pirates." Allal answered.

"Now, recall Earth." The voice asked.

That again.

"Your home, your life. Depopulated. And the scattered children of the Solar System, transported across the stars." The voice blared.

"Yes, I recognize that. Is this some sort of afterlife?"

"Yes, indeed: though this is not your mere normal afterlife, it is a physical afterlife hidden in the Solar System. Once, your ancestors search for the enigmatic

Planet 9; and here it is the planet you are standing on." The voice said, and Allal was shocked. "I thought that was a disproven myth?"

"It was a myth before, now real in front of you; *this planet is a rogue planet with a mind of its own, seeking and consoling the worlds of the dying, of the left, of the abandoned.* A people that do not know their origin will lose its soul to the void of oblivion. The chair you sit upon is a testament to the harmonious coexistence between nature and technology, a symbol of the symbiotic relationship that sustains this haven, but contains the souls of all civilizations and your descendants who had yet to realize that the loss and their abuse of the homeworld is a people that are fated to die."

Suddenly the voices, both comprehensible and incomprehensible

pervade his five senses; awe turned into fear. And with the stopping of the voices, he sat on the chair once more and the voices died with it. It became a normal chair once more.

"How long I have been here?" Allal asked.

"Twenty years have passed since your ship crashed on this wandering planet that drifted into the Cosmos everywhere on what you call the Universe, heeding the voices and cries and moans of dying civilizations because they forgot their home." The voice said.

"I ask," Allal questioned, "Why do we need to remember our home? Why do we need the original home?"

And the voice asked calmly, "Your Home is a connection to your roots, your identity, and the source of your existence. Remembering your home is not just a

sentimental act; it's a crucial part of preserving the essence of who you are and where you come from. Your ancestors sought the enigmatic Planet 9 not merely as a physical place but as a symbol of a lost connection, a yearning to understand their origin and purpose in the vastness of the cosmos. Before what you called the Great Emigration, where mankind marched towards the stars and settled them, there are Nations and Civilizations that were present there on your planet. They ask, 'What does it mean to love your Country, your Roots, and your Nation?', and I have an answer: we mustn't forget our origins and the bonds that tie us to our home, for in doing so, we risk losing the very essence of our existence: the seed that became the light of all."

The voice added more to his wisdom. "Your home is all that is left of

your heritage – you should not lose it, and you lost it; you will be cursed and all of mankind with it by your own sacred amnesia. Losing the home is like losing your parents. The moment that the people that nurtured you and grown with you has been lost or disappear, man will continue to make mistakes. Man will be barbaric; its divine place in the universe will be lost."

Allal listened intently, absorbing the weight of the revelation. "Home is where the heart is at, home is where we began our existence…"

"…And your home - your planet - is your Father and Mother: *it sustains and nurtures you, providing the sacred soil from which the roots of your existence intertwine with the delicate threads of life that bind you to the vast tapestry of the cosmos*."

Allal was deeply sad after the last sentence. The loss of home is a longing for

home; what does a child feel after losing his parents? Simple: A child feels an overwhelming sense of profound loss, confusion, and emotional turmoil, grappling with the daunting void left by the absence of the foundational figures in their life. It will face fear, death, anger, the primacy of death that leads to violence – *everything!*

So does the same for abandoning the planet.

"Does that mean Mankind will die for losing his home?" Allal ask.

"Yes. You will become slaves to death, like countless other civilizations before you." The voice said.

Allal was then traumatized; paranoia overtakes him. *I must get out of here! I must warn—*

The voice heard his thoughts. "Don't be fearful, my child; for I am here

to spread the message amongst you, and you are my Prophet; you are the Messenger of God himself, and you will warn Mankind for its abandonment of the Cradle of God. Ye shall tell your wandering people of the Earth to return from their existential slavery, and for God wills thee, by the divine, to call back and return to the homeworld, and thus you shall be united people again."

With that, Allal heard the voice, and he calmed down. He later asked, "Why me?"

"You have been chosen because you possess the qualities of resilience, understanding, and a deep connection to your roots. Your experiences and the journey you have undertaken make you the ideal messenger to convey the importance of returning to the scattered children of Mankind. Through you,

mankind has a chance to break free from the cycle of abandonment and find redemption in reestablishing the connection with their original home, the Cradle of God. Mankind should be aware by now that you are the only intelligent civilization that is allowed by life to exist; the rest is dead. The universe is lifeless, but you are the chosen people allowed by Life to live."

"The Fermi Paradox was real?" Allal said in wonder.

"Yes, it is: you are the last living race in the Galaxy chosen by life to exist, and your impending doom is near: you are in front of the Great Filter."

"What should I do?" said Allal.

"I am the Voice of the Planet, and I am God Manifest as the guardian of the universe and the keeper of the Cradle of God. I have put your faith and strength in

Mankind, for you are the last of the children. Your mission, Allal, is to go back to Earth and deliver the message of the importance of returning to the homeworld. You must guide humanity in rediscovering their roots, embracing their connection to Earth, and breaking free from the existential slavery that awaits them if they continue to wander and abandon their origins. Through your words and actions, you will be the beacon of hope, urging mankind to unite and rebuild their civilizations on the sacred soil of their ancestral home, the Cradle of God, before the impending doom reaches them." The voice said.

"I am not an intelligent man, nor a charismatic man, like other people. I am unsuitable for the job." Allal complained.
"And that is why I will give this to you." The Voice of the Planet stopped, and in

front of Allal, a table materializes in front of him; and a long rectangular box made of bioplastic emerged from it. He grabbed the box and opened it, and it contained a book made from Nanocellulose materials and not paper as he expected. It contained the teachings of the Voice of the Planet, and he kept it by his right hand. "Now go, my messenger, and sit on the chair, and I will guide you back to your own people." The Voice of the Planet said commandingly, and Allal accepted it.

Allal, overwhelmed by the gravity of his mission, nodded in solemn understanding. The chair beneath him transformed once again, this time into a vessel that could traverse the vastness of space. As the voice guided him, he embarked on a journey back to Earth, carrying the weight of the message that could determine the fate of humanity.

EPILOGUE

The victories and triumphs
Will always truly reign in those
Who follow my sacred teachings:
May the right light prosper on!

– The Diarize of Earth (simply known as the Diarize), Book of Revelation and Prophecy, Chapter 9, Verses 60 to 64 [Diarize 9:60-64]

[Excerpt from the History of Human Religions, published 200 years after the Reorganization Era. Volume 5, pg. 455, 'Earthlighters'.]

"After the publishing of the Diarize of Earth (also known as the Diarize) in the planet Centauri, the new religious movement simultaneously

spread to other human populations around Known Space; it became the largest and fastest religion to spread according to theologians. This is the starting point for the creation of the new religious movement. First, the Messenger of Mankind Allal started to preach in the Earthling Ghetto, where slums of Earth-descended humans are gatekept by the Centauri humans for 650 years since the Extrasolar War. From there, the religion spread and grew in numbers to every human population on Earth; the new religious movement became the largest and fastest religion to spread according to theologians and statisticians. Because they believe Earth to be the sacred home of Mankind, their religious movement is called by its members Earthlighters; and also because they also believe that they

wish to bring light once more on the original homeworld of Mankind.

However, this is a great misunderstanding of their theology: although they believe Earth is sacred and should not be defiled as in with other Abrahamic Religions that believe that Jerusalem is also sacred and should not be defiled (in the case of pre-Migration Earth), they believed in a living and physical God that exists and manifests as a Planet (in the case, the newly discovered Planet 9 in the Solar System, which their adherents call 'Herald', but is called 'Erebus' in official terms) in the Material World. They believe that the Universe is God's creation, but God manifests in this universe to oversee the development of His own sacred creation. Earth, while sacred, is also divine in its own right, but is not a god itself. It can therefore be

concluded that this type of theological belief is called is a form of Panentheistic Monotheism, or Pan-monotheism, where they believe that there is a singular, transcendent God who is both immanent within the universe and also extends beyond it.

Like every other religion that exists in all of mankind today, harsh critics of the religion call it a 'cult with false promises of salvation' and 'a fallible useless religion that is delusional in nature'.

Since the establishment of the religion, it has, like other religions, influence the course and charter of human history. At a time where the worries of a disappearing memory of the homeland start to take over and grow, and the terraforming of Proxima Centauri b in to a sort of a reconstructed 'New Earth', it's

followers since the founding of the Religion had begun to move *en masse* to the planet itself; at first, it was the wealthy Earth-descendant humans who had preserved their genetic line unaltered who came back to the ruined, desolated and destroyed Earth settled back and transformed the Earth's southern areas into a habitable zone; however, the rest of the Earthlings, who are poor, are struggling to get out of their ghettoes and discriminatory enclaves. Earth-descendant humans were treated as second-class citizens and are deemed inferior to all other humans; they were discriminated upon and often led to mass persecution in most human civilizations.

Allal then began cooperating with the wealthy members of the religion in an effort to aid the persecuted in their exile to their homeland; and they did so for three

years, transporting over 3 Million Earthborn stateless citizens back to Earth. However, all four governments began to implement a harsh crackdown on these programs; starships were eliminated in sight, and all four agreed to quarantine the entire Solar System at large. Instead of slowing down the religion, this action made it embolden in its actions; proselytization and conversion became more prominent in the religion. The alarming conversion rate of the religion became a warning sign to intensify its crackdown on the religion, and so the mass purges and pogroms become galore in this period. In response to this, the Sacred Brotherhood of Earth's Light began moves to fund what all governments called 'Front Groups' to form militias dedicated to the protection of the Earthlings.

One such group, the Ashen Light of Earth, was formed in the star SCR 1845−6357 (now called the Martyrs Star by its followers) during the early days of the Sacred Brotherhood. It was formed when a group of Earthling prisoners imprisoned unjustly in the so-called Bastion (a space station housing political prisoners) according to its members by the Luyten Government began their rebellion around the prison after staging minor attacks in the barrack offices and cutting all internal and external communication from outside space. The Luyten Alliance sent a space fleet to subdue them, but because it was so heavily fortified, they cannot defeat them, and they backed off at first. Three months later, with the cooperation of the Centauri and other interstellar governments, they successfully recaptured the fortress but an estimated

250,000 people escaped the Bastion and 170,000 people dead trying to resist them. This is known as the Martyrs Massacre according to the religion.

Today, members of the new religion mostly live in the Solar System; and there are populations that exist on other planets inhabited by Mankind."

The Death and Rebirth of Cesselia

This world was once our home.
It was once full of life.
But the day it died, I still remember.
And I watched it all fall.

The sounds of people screaming and crying in lines can be heard from the walk-streets below. Shouts of "Move!" repeated themselves as the Common Constabularies moved the citizens in orderly lines towards the starport; the roars of star-engines headed the troubled skies, with evacuation ships lifting themselves above the clouds. The military starjets had ascended and risen towards

the sky, the gleaming emblem of the Cesselia Aerial Legions seen passing by towards every apartment.

And up there in the tower was a Cesselian woman who watched it all unfold on the refractory screens that records this momentous time in history.

She sat and watched, drinking her Morit'ssaa tea, unconcerned about the situation, yet her antennae are shaking.

The shadows of the blue star are rising, the clouds appearing, the vast and endless sky fainting.

And more starships are landing at every starport possible in order to evacuate as many people as they can.

The clickety-clack steps of a Cesselian can be heard down the hallway; these control rooms are not sound-proofed, as common in Old Cesselian architecture, when the golden age of

Cesselian civilization was at its height some 4,500 years ago still was beautiful in the eyes of the populace.

Before the rise of the Techno-Deocracy.

Before the Civil Wars of the Cesselian Empire.

Before the era of the New Order that started the Third Renaissance of the Cesselian civilization.

Before the numerous crises and all threats, natural or not, came crashing down to the Techno-Deocracy.

And here she is, a historian-turned-civil administrator, sitting in the chair that is representative of the New Cesselian civilization, probably made over 500 years ago.

The hissing sounds of the elegant doors can be heard.

"Lordess Chanaissande!" he screamed.

She looked back. It was a Cesselian Dominie - and a face that was familiar to him.

Chanaissande looked forward to the windows and drank a cup of tea again.

The Dominie was startled why she had not evacuated.

An awkward silence fills the room.

"Lordess?" He asked anxiously.

"I wish to stay here."

He was shocked. "You can't be serious..."

"I have a duty. A duty to oversee my own people." she answered back.

Then silence again. Chanaissande, or Chanai as some people affectionately call her, was in charge of overseeing this evacuation in this region of the continent. The region known as the Chemai'nara, it

was the home of the Nasaryk Sovereign Republic and the Southern Administration Zone of the Techno-Deocracy. Once, this region was at war with its own species, for the Nasaryk Cesselian and the Deocratine Cesselian wished to resolve the status of autonomy and was resolved by a treaty eight years ago. And in that important treaty was the end of the last wars of unification, wishing to cooperate each other and help each other in a spirit of brotherhood.

Now, that spirit was threatened, not to divide them, but to face a common existential threat.

Chanai walked to the control board, pushed the buttons that opened up a holocommunicator, and asked: "Is everyone evacuated?"

"Yes, Lordess." A Constabulary officer sternly replied. "95% of the population was evacuated."

"Good."

"Proceed to Phase II: *the administrators are now the target of evacuation*."

Then she pushed the button and the holoscreen disappeared.

"Lordess, you have to go!" said the Dominie, who begged her to leave and to come to her senses. He was beginning to worry!

"*No, I will stay!*" she said. "This planet, our homeworld, is our life! I cannot leave it, nor let it die leaving it like a lost soul that suffers! I shall be with it, and die with it; I will stand here, not as a hero, but a Cesselian that becomes one with the world, one with us!"

He was mortified by the speech. The Dominie was shocked of her response.

And now I see why people like her, the Dominie thought.

Five years ago, Chanaissande was elected by the people to the Sacred Senate because she was a woman who truly cared for the people, a trait that led her dubbed by the media "a woman of action". Her candidacy was backed by the Thearchate of the Tabernacle of the White Hole, the Arcandl'yne Law Compact, the Society of Divine Societal Engineers, and of course, the devout masses who loved her programs during her time in the Interstellar Court, and her sense of love and justice for the people. Even the banned religious group known as the Order-Darkness of the Stained Comet,

notorious for staging terrorist attacks Empire-wide, voted for her in unison.

She was patriotic, intelligent, and a people of the masses; opponents accuse her actions as a means to "garner populism" throughout the empire and accused her of regressing policies that will return the Cesselian civilization to collapse. As one opposing candidate put it, "she wants to return to a state of collapse similar to the end of the reign of the New Order."

And now, she doesn't want to waste all this effort. This was her homeworld, she was a native here. She lived here and knew the people around him; she had become one with it.

Her face became sad, and looked at the window.

The Dominie looked at her, and began to open the Macalai'gonnon, the

holy scripture of the Tabernacle of the White Hole, and thus, after scrolling through multiple pages of bioluminescent plastic paper, he chanted:

Donantine-hail nel'Arguine[4] *mor,*
Ahrrinatta morset cain'Arguine se,
Termassyn-ai lyhaine calycla dan,
Mor senuine, dely nel'Arguine!

[In suffering, we become one with Arguine,
All life and all matters of death leads to Him,

[4] Arguine is the Supreme God of the Cesselians; He is the Supreme Deity of the Cesselians, a Theopanistic deity where they believe that God became the Universe around it, and its manifestations are White Holes that exist in the universe.

All is everything, God indeed, even to the self;
And we all return to Him in the beyond!]

He stopped chanting, and said these words to heart: "God is everything; and all souls, whether fate comes to live or die, we all return to the primordial universe into the White Hole, where we live our lives in peace, sheltered from all that is harm. Come to your senses, Chanai; the people need you. Instead of suffering together with it and all its painful memories, why not join your people and be with them, so you can guide your people to a better tomorrow and never experience the same suffering as you are today?"

She looked back and thought.

Suddenly the holoscreen appeared. It contained a warning:

CRITICAL MASS APPROACHING
SOLAR MASS UNSTABLE
HYPERNOVA IMMINENT TO
HAPPEN
LEAVE, OR DIE IN VAIN

"Let us leave, my Lordess!" said the Dominie.

She came to her senses, and she agreed finally.

Both took the astroshuttle in the hangar of the tower and boarded it; it let out a fierce whirl, and reached space in no time; as soon as they got to the atmosphere, they boarded one of the military starships, in particular a Dreadnought known as CHMS *Anchisande*, named after the Aspect of Arguine, Anchisande – the *genus loci* of the Cesselian people.

Once boarded, they turned to the windows and the starships has jump-spaced to a safe distance, where they will see their solar system one last time.

In the distant reaches of the cosmos, where galaxies swirl like celestial dances, a cataclysmic event was about to unfold. The Cesselian astronomers had already began their grand calculation that will doom their homeworld a hundred years later: they were once disproved by their astronomers of their time, saying it will not happen; and a hundred years later, their calculations was right.

So they prepared for this moment, just in case; they have already settled another planet outside their solar system fifty years ago and named it Nouai'tannebarough – the New Society in the Cesselian language.

Nestled within a vast nebula, a dying blue star known as Cani'bailame, several times more massive than our sun, was nearing the end of its stellar journey. This stellar behemoth, had lived for millions of years, burning bright and fierce, hosted multiple planets that paved the way to the birth of the Cesselian civilization, but its life was drawing to a close.

As the hydrogen fuel within Cani'bailame's core became depleted, gravity started to take over, causing the star's core to contract and heat up. This triggered a violent series of nuclear reactions, as helium atoms fused together to form heavier elements, like carbon and oxygen. The energy released in this process created a tremendous outward pressure, counteracting the crushing force

of gravity trying to collapse the star further.

But even this titanic struggle could not last forever. As the star continued to consume its nuclear fuel, it eventually reached a point of no return. The core's temperature skyrocketed, and the star's outer layers ballooned outward, expanding into a brilliant red giant. At this moment, Cani'bailame was an awe-inspiring sight for other lifeforms visible from light-years away, but for the Cesselians, it was a sad and painful sight to see their solar system die in front of their eyes naturally.

Yet, as with all massive stars, Cani'bailame's destiny was sealed. Its core kept contracting until it became so dense and hot that it ignited a new round of fusion, forming even heavier elements like iron and nickel. This fusion, however, did not release enough energy to counteract

the relentless force of gravity. In an instant, the core collapsed under its weight, causing a catastrophic implosion.

The shockwave from the core's collapse rippled outward, causing the outer layers to crash into the core with unimaginable force. This colossal collision generated an unimaginable explosion, releasing more energy in a few seconds than our sun could produce in its entire lifetime. Cani'bailame was now a Hypernova, a rare and extraordinary event in the universe.

The explosion wiped all of the nine planets it had, destroyed, like a ball of sand hitting a wall. For Chanai, seeing the homeworld of the Cesselian civilization, Nagarlunia, was a painful sight to see; anguish and pain engulfed her emotions.

The Hypernova's brilliance outshone an entire galaxy, its intense

luminosity casting an eerie glow across the surrounding space. The cataclysmic release of energy sent forth powerful jets of radiation and particles, piercing through the stellar remnants and into space like cosmic arrows. These deadly beams were capable of sterilizing planets and obliterating entire solar systems.

As the Hypernova's brilliant light reached neighboring stars, astronomers in Nouai'tannebarough turned their telescopes to behold the cosmic spectacle. Some were fortunate enough to witness the birth of a new nebula, the shockwave from the Hypernova creating breathtaking cosmic clouds where future stars would eventually form.

But even as the Hypernova painted the heavens with its majestic light, it marked the end of Cani'bailame's existence. The remaining core, now a

black hole of immense proportions, consumed the surrounding debris, becoming a gravitational abyss from which nothing, not even light, could escape.

The remnants of Cani'bailame's Hypernova slowly scattered across the universe, seeding the cosmos with heavy elements forged in the star's final moments. From the death of one celestial giant came the potential for new life, as these elements would go on to be incorporated into future generations of stars, planets, and even life forms.

But it will take a million years for this to form.

And so, in the grand tapestry of the cosmos, Cani'bailame's Hypernova would forever remain a captivating chapter, a testament to the unfathomable power and beauty of the universe, an

event both wondrous and devastating, shaping the destiny of the cosmos for eons to come.

At the end of the spectacle and the journey to Nouai'tannebarough begins, Chanai wept, for her beloved home is gone.

She cried and cried, a jewel lost in the void.

However, the sound of chanting is heard, and she listened:

Ira lentin canbaroga sl'Nilinta kanki heos,
Barcan'linita dalu na'kinta se ne ta-morin
Calaga'nilatun sai danara houlu kun'ilna lih
Tarbag kag dicia sil'Contin, sil'Lutanaa
Tarbag hosyn alcan durnan-sse un yna es tes.

[Gone where the winds of pain close to heart,

Such is life! Cruel indeed it is; but know this,
In any situation, we be faithful in high hopes
And strive for peace of mind, peace of heart
And calmness when the harshness of life comes up.]

She turned back, and it was that Dominie from before. He stood there, undergoing the same process as her, but he had overcome the pain and sadness caused by the event that shook their lives.

She wiped her purple tears using a fibraluminose handkerchief, comforted and calmed by the recitation of a prayer chant.

"It's painful to lose a home you loved," said Chanai.

"I understand. Sometimes there are moments of change that appear sudden and overwhelming, yet in the end these moments will come to pass; let this experience be engraved in the memory of our species, and let us become better versions of ourselves as the painful emotions of the past wither away." Said the Dominie.

"Thank you for your kind and comforting words, Dominie Khansin."

"Arguine blesses you," greets the Dominie.

Then a silence in the ship follows forth.

"So, how are you?" said Khansin cheerfully.

"I am fine, my dear." Said Chanai.

"Should we walk to the Dining halls of the starship? It would be fun!"

"Oh sure; be a gentleman for me – walk me there."

And the Dominie, in true pious fashion, guided her from the viewing deck and led her to the grand corridors of the starship, along with millions of people packed there.

The painful feelings are gone after that,
And with the end of the withering old world,
A new life, a new journey comes forth to replace it.
And so happy are we, living new lives
As we set sail to our new home planet to start all over again.

Praise Arguine, all that is reality
For you gave us a chance to live
And not succumb ourselves to death.

Shore of Heaven

Her eyes are opened. Slowly, the eyelids began to open, and she only saw the endless abyss that was a white sky full of black stars, with spread cotton-like clouds in the far distances of her vision; she stood up, slowly and foreboding. She stood on water, feeling a strange weightlessness as if the laws of nature had been altered. Her heart raced, and her mind struggled to grasp the surreal reality unfolding before her. As she looked around, she noticed that there was no discernible horizon; it was as if she stood at the very edge of existence.

The air was cool and carried a scent she couldn't quite place, a mix of something sweet and metallic. The water beneath her feet felt solid and yielding, like some form of ethereal ground, but it rippled and sparkled with an otherworldly luminescence with a tinge of a little bit that was a dark texture in the ground.

In the distance, she saw a peculiar structure that defied the laws of physics and logic. It appeared to be a city, but the buildings seemed to be constructed from iridescent, semi-transparent material that glowed and pulsed with an inner light. The city's spires and bridges seemed to reach towards the heavens, stretching infinitely into the celestial whiteness above.

And the words she first uttered: "Where am I?" She realized she answered her own question, resulting in mixed

emotions in her face; she was in the afterlife, probably.

None unless she must confirm something that she was, indeed, in the afterlife.

Her curiosity overcame her unease, and she started walking towards the enigmatic city. With each step, the ground seemed to respond to her presence, glowing and morphing, creating intricate patterns of light beneath her feet. She realized that she was not alone on this peculiar shore. Ethereal beings, with forms that shimmered like quicksilver, moved through the city, attending to tasks she couldn't fathom; but she saw them from far away, into the far city.

But no ethereal being spotted here in this plain and featureless land, save for the city.

As she ventured further into this ethereal realm, she began to understand that she had arrived at a place that transcended the boundaries of the known universe. This was not Earth, and she was no longer bound by the constraints of the physical world. She had found herself in a place beyond imagination, where dreams and reality danced in an eternal symphony.

With each step, she felt a profound sense of connection to the universe and an overwhelming feeling of tranquility. She felt her own existence; while she can touch her body, which implies that her flesh is still here. If she was a spirit, then her hands must have penetrated her own body immediately – but she did not.

However, while she was stepping on this endless 'land', it became clear to her that this was, indeed, the afterlife; but

none clarified so as when a winged human descended silently on her back. Only did she turn when she heard a deep '*plok*!' behind her; and that is where she saw the winged humanoid behind her.

And so, the winged being gazed at her with luminous, iridescent eyes, its wings shimmering like a cascade of prismatic light. The being seemed ethereal, yet somehow tangible, and its presence exuded a sense of otherworldly wisdom. He approached and said:

"Are you a newcomer?" the ethereal being said.

"Yes, yes I am." She said that with grace, and respect.

"*What do you feel?*" the ethereal being said.

She seems to be troubled by that question; she is here, yes, but can she feel it? When one is in the afterlife, how can

she feel? Feelings are stimuli responses to certain perceptions of our senses, our organs, that aid ourselves in revealing the world around us; when we feel, we feel the material objects and those inputs are received by the brain, therefore making the brain register it as a physical, material object that can be felt by humans.

But here, it is much different.

She can feel, but the trouble is she is not in her 'physical environment': that is, the real world, the material world, the world that she can feel objects around her. This, must register differently to her, for feeling the material is not the same as feeling the immaterial. Does she perceive the immaterial as with the material during her time on Earth? Feelings in the immaterial do affect her perception of the abstract. Just as she perceives the physical, so can she perceive the non-physical; she

can perceive the nature of the abstract as much as everyone – that is why humans form and conceptualize abstract concepts that can be felt by people.

So she answered, "I feel what I feel, for this is abstract, and abstract things can be felt."

The ethereal being nodded her in agreement.

"Very well. I see you are an enigmatic being." Said the ethereal being.

"Where am I?" she reiterated that question from the beginning when she entered the world unconsciously.

"The Afterlife." The enigmatic being confidently said. "The place where their material bodies die, but their immaterial soul remains and ascend to this plane of existence so that they can be stored and live here forever. You, my dearest, while you can feel like your

material body, are a spirit; an immaterial being. You are intact immaterially, but your material self has dissolved in your physical reality. You have a body, just like mine; while you can still perceive like you did in the material realm, it is just an illusion: you are a spirit, for you are what remained of the immaterial soul."

The enigmatic being ended his explanation, and said: "Did you follow?" The woman said, "Yes, I am."

Silence.

Then she asked, "What am I?"

"You are a soul, the one that represents the abstract existence in the wholeness of the world. But you are not just a mere soul; you are the vessel of reality. You are a being in reality, experiencing the world, either the material or immaterial, or a little sideways of both,

in the world, living in the world, aware of the world around you."

"Ah, I see." Said she.

The ethereal being said, "Now that we are on the topic of Beingness, I ask of your identity."

"What is Identity?" said she.

You got me a good question with that one, thought the ethereal being. "Ah, good!" the being said. He cleared his throat and said, "Identity is what makes up your own being: all that makes you a sapient being, all that makes 'you' you a person – it is what represents you in the world, the traits that you possess that stands out amongst the others, a unique being that defines you, even if other persons share the same traits at you similarly, but one or two or many aspects stand that makes you a unique person in the first place. All of your lived

experiences are interactions with reality and your identity as a whole in the universe. Beliefs, values, and such other things… these are parts of your identity that plays a role in how you interact with the world. Identity is you, but in reality." And he ended his explanation there.

Silence again, and he asked, "*Who are you?*"

"I am Airelea. Died by Stoneman Syndrome. Indeed an extraordinary woman back in the material world before the agony of death consumes me in that condition; nightmarish, yes, but I persevered, and entered in the afterlife knowing I found peace here. *In the material, that is*."

The ethereal being was awed and horrified at the same time: he cannot but help emphasize with her struggles during her time in the Material World. Airelea's

story had an air of uniqueness about it, something that struck a chord with the ethereal being who had encountered countless souls from the Material World. Her resilience and determination in the face of suffering had left an impression on him, for he seldom came across souls who could articulate their experiences with such clarity.

Which like the countless individuals beforehand, the ethereal being is no stranger to these kinds of things.

"Is there a Life after Death?" Airelea asked.

"Why? Do you believe that there is none?" the ethereal being said.

"I wish to make sure that this is not a prank, or a mere simple dream in my head."

“If this is a prank, or a mere dream, then why are you here?” said the ethereal being.

Airelea pondered the ethereal being's question. It was a valid point. If this were a dream or a prank, it was unlike any dream she had ever experienced. It was more vivid, more real than anything in the physical world. She could think, feel, and reason just as she could in her previous life, and the environment around her was far too complex and nuanced to be the product of a mere dream or prank.

The ethereal being, sensing her uncertainty, continued, "In the afterlife, the concept of time and reality is different from what you knew in the Material World. Here, things are as real as they can be, and the experiences you have are just as significant, if not more so, than those in the physical realm. The question of

whether there is life after death is a profound one, and it has been contemplated by countless souls who have passed through here. What you experience now, Airelea, is your reality."

"Ah." Although uneasy, Airelea accepted this explanation.

Airelea thought again, and she nodded once more, beginning to accept that the fact it's her current reality that she lived in. She had already experienced death; if this was a dream, then why her brain did not force her to awaken in the material reality like in every dream that had passed 35 years since her birth. Thus she concluded that she truly died in the material world, for her brain did not wake up from her slumber; thus she accepted quickly the fact of the enigmatic nature of her new existence. She had entered a realm beyond the comprehension of the living,

and it was a place where the rules of the physical world no longer applied.

After all, where on Earth do you see black stars and a white expanse? That is physically impossible.

"Tell me, Airelea," the ethereal being said, "*What do you desire in this afterlife?*"

Airelea thought for a moment, her mind wandering through the memories of her life on Earth. She had faced hardship and suffering, but she had also experienced moments of joy, love, and accomplishment. Her desires in this new realm were different, not driven by the limitations of the physical world.

"I desire knowledge and understanding," Airelea replied. "I want to explore this realm, learn about its mysteries, and perhaps find answers to the questions that have puzzled humanity for

centuries. I want to understand the nature of existence, the purpose of our journey, and the meaning of life and death."

The ethereal being smiled, its iridescent eyes glowing with approval. "Your thirst for knowledge and understanding is a noble one, Airelea. In the afterlife, there are no constraints on what you can explore and discover. You have eternity to delve into the mysteries of the universe. Your journey here is not bound by the limitations of the Material World, and your pursuit of wisdom can be limitless."

"*So do I have free will at all?"* Airelea asked another hard-hitting question at the ethereal being.

"There is no Free Will, neither does Fate; you have secured a degree of freedom, but you are still confined in this reality. Both concepts are obsolete, for

wherever you go in the world, you have the free agency to do something, but since you are confined in this reality, the actions you take are limited in this total reality we live in – both material and immaterial, the both of them are two major components that make up our reality and existence. For others, this may justify their belief in that there is no free will, because a limitation, or any other kind of limit imposed on you, is not freedom; however, for others, this may justify their belief in that there is free will, for they argue that since we have the freedom to choose our paths in life whatever we want, we have the unlimited and unrestricted power to shape our destinies as we navigate through the constraints of our existence."

He stopped there to take a lick in the water beneath him, and after quenching his thirst, he continued.

"However, both is an illusion, for both concepts are obsolete: the reason? It's because the truth lies in the intricate interplay between the constraints of reality and the choices we make, creating a complex tapestry of existence that transcends the simplistic notions of free will or fate. Both are the anathema, the antithesis of what *living in an all-encompassing reality is*."

Airelea nodded at him, satisfied at the long answer.

"Ah, so… yeah, this is my reality now. Nothing can change it." She said it and smiled after.

"Indeed, nothing changes after death. You are here because you died, and you will live here for the rest of your life in the Afterlife – the place where souls go after they die." The ethereal being said.

After the last discussion, they have become silent once more.

As Airelea ended her last conversation with the ethereal being, she realized that her existence had taken on a new purpose. In this afterlife, she had the opportunity to explore the abstract, to seek the ultimate truths that had eluded her in her previous life. It was a place where her identity was not limited by the constraints of the physical body but expanded into the boundless expanse of the immaterial.

Without uttering a word, it extended a hand towards Airelea. It was a sign that the discussion was finished.

She hesitated, her heart pounding with a mixture of awe and trepidation. The winged entity seemed to emanate a profound serenity, and Airelea felt an

unspoken invitation in its gentle gaze. Tentatively, she reached out and took the outstretched hand.

As their fingers touched, she felt a surge of knowledge flood her consciousness. In an instant, she understood that she had indeed crossed the boundary between life and death. This place was the afterlife, a realm of endless possibilities and eternal existence. The winged being was a guardian of this mysterious realm, a guide to help her navigate the unfathomable shores of Heaven.

With a nod of acknowledgment, the winged guardian unfurled its majestic wings, and Airelea felt a powerful current of energy lift her off the ground. They soared together through the white sky, past the radiant city, and into realms she could have never imagined in her wildest

dreams. They traversed cosmic landscapes, passed through realms of light and shadow, and glimpsed the secrets of the universe.

In every journey they take, the ethereal being imparted to her the knowledge that in the Afterlife, one could shape reality with their thoughts and desires, which time was an illusion, and that love, wisdom, and compassion were the guiding forces of this realm.

As they traveled through the boundless heavens, Airelea realized that her existence was no longer limited by mortality. Here, she was free to explore the cosmos, unlock the mysteries of the universe, and connect with the souls of those who had come before her. This Afterlife was a place of infinite possibilities, a place where her journey had only just begun.

About the author

"Never measure the idealism of a man based on his face, but his ideals and virtues instead."
- Joshua Kyle T. Rovero

I am the author of this book – which is my first one – is a living human person who wishes to contribute to the fields of the Humanities by expounding my own new Philosophy *as a new way of looking into the world*, from the perspective of my own new ideas. Building upon Heidegger's framework and using his to create new interpretations of the world (for which I am indebted to his philosophy and metaphysics; and theology as well), my ideas will be a staple for the re-enchantment of Philosophy across the world.

This, I am indeed a Philosopher; one that thinks in a new light.